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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the first three volumes (six issues) of the journal "TESOL in Context". Issues contain articles on a variety of topics in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), focusing on current issues and concerns in Australia. Article topics include teaching techniques and methods, program and course descriptions, teacher training, classroom management, instructional materials, and class activities. All levels of education (elementary, secondary, postsecondary) are included. Five of the issues have themes: literacy and literature instruction; collaborative/cooperative learning; student assessment; development of oral language skills; and classroom research. Professional announcements, interviews, a problem-solving column, book announcements, and instructional materials reviews are included in each issue. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

TESOL IN CONTEXT

Perspectives
PracTESOL
TESOL Talk
Resources
ESL & The Mainstream

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TESOL in Context is a publication of the Australian Council of TESOL Associations for teachers and schools with TESOL programs. It will appear twice per year.

TESOL in Context has six sections:

1. *TESOL Perspectives*, which will contain two or three articles of 1000 - 2000 words on issues, curriculum strategies and policies;
2. *PracTESOL*, which will contain five or six articles of 2000 - 3000 words on good ideas and applications, classroom tactics, materials and units of work and so on;
3. *TESOL Talk*, where practising teachers talk about their work and experience;
4. *TESOL Reviewer*, in depth reviews of books and materials;
5. *TESOL Resources*, which will contain notices and short, practical reviews and descriptions of human and material resources, with information on where to contact or obtain them;
6. *TESOL Troubleshooter*, a readers' query column, which will focus on practical problems and issues raised by readers.

Articles, notices or letters should be sent to

The Editor, ***TESOL in Context***
4 Ada Street
West Preston Victoria 3072.

Contributions should be typed and double-spaced on white A4 paper, with a margin of at least 4 cm on the left side. At least two copies should be submitted.

Contributors should attach a statement of up to 35 words containing their name/s, position and institutional affiliations, and relevant interests and experience.

All references to books, articles and other sources are to be identified at an appropriate point in the text by name of author, year of publication and pagination, e.g., (Cleland and Evans, 1988: 5). For references in appendix titled References, list all items cited in the text alphabetically by author, and for each author, by year of publication, e.g., Cleland, Bill & Evans, Ruth, 1987, *Learning English Through Topics About Asia Teacher's Book*, ESL Topic Books, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne.

Preference will be given to original articles relevant to the interface between the teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages and mainstream teaching as well as practical specialist TESOL material.

Reviews and materials for review should be sent to the Review Editor

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* Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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A Word From The President

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure and anticipation that I take this opportunity to introduce you to our new journal, ***TESOL in Context.*** Aimed at the chalkface, written by practitioners for practitioners, it will provide a much-needed national voice for all those concerned with TESOL particularly in schools. Since the departure of *TESOL News*, the profession has been without a high-quality Australian publication that tackles issues of interest and concern to general English-as-a-second language education.

As the national co-ordinating body of all state professional associations for teachers of English to speakers of other languages, the Australian Council of TESOL associations (ACTA) has been a strong and committed advocate of TESOL. Since its inception ACTA has been planning the development of its own journal, both as a forum of discussion for its membership and as a way of raising the profile of the profession, particularly at the school level. It is fitting, therefore, that the first issue of ***TESOL in Context*** should have been supported by the Commonwealth Schools Commission and should include a strong focus on the school sector. No other area of TESOL education seems to be so poorly resourced, so fragmented and so vulnerable to political and social change. We hope that this journal can help to highlight the most urgent concerns and provide a channel for constructive comment and change.

We hope that ***TESOL in Context*** can also help to overcome some of the feelings of isolation experienced by teachers working in many ESL contexts, especially teachers in the smaller states. We would particularly welcome their contributions.

We hope that this sharing of ideas and resources across Australia will provide an invaluable source of stimulus and support for all those amongst you, whether working in specialist ESL or in the general classroom, who have been entrusted with the formidable task of helping to bridge the language gap in the multicultural reality of the 1990's.

Chris Davison
President,
Australian Council of TESOL Associations.

Melbourne
August 1990

Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of ***TESOL in Context !***

Why ***TESOL in Context*** ? We believe our challenge in teaching English to speakers of other languages is to develop better ways of enabling learners to fully participate in public life in Australia. At school level public life means by and large the curriculum and life of the school community. The challenge confronts both the TESOL specialist and the whole school, as we find reflected in the current national policy of mainstreaming TESOL provision. ***TESOL in Context*** hopes to publish, therefore, material at the interface of TESOL and the mainstream curriculum, material both for the specialist teachers of ESOL (whether they work mainly in specialist classes or together with non-TESOL colleagues) and mainstream class and other subject-specialist teachers who teach learners of English who are speakers of other languages.

In order to make ***TESOL in Context*** useful to teachers and schools, we are planning that each issue will contain *TESOL Perspectives* : articles of 1000-2000 words on issues, policies and strategies; *PracTESOL* : several articles of 2000-3000 words on practical applications and classroom tactics such as units of work, teaching material and good ideas; *TESOL Talk*: where practising teachers talk informally about their work and experience; *TESOL Resources* : information, notices and short, practical reviews on human and material resources, together with details on where to contact or obtain them; *TESOL Reviewer* : in-depth reviews of books and materials; and the *TESOL Troubleshooter* column of discussion of practical problems and readers' queries about TESOL. We are interested in reports of current research and summaries of academic issues written in a form accessible to busy teachers.

In this issue, *TESOL Perspectives* begins by considering what distinguishes TESOL from mainstream teaching. Then Andrew Kay discusses mainstreaming ESL provision from his experience of inservice courses in Adelaide. Colin Beasley describes a tertiary program which attempts to integrate language, learning skills and course content in TESOL. His remarks will strike chords with postprimary and other teachers too.

In *PracTESOL*, Chris Davison looks at the natural learning approach to language in the primary school and its effectiveness in catering for ESL learners. She shows us some examples of work program plans and language policies from two schools to bring together the best of mainstream and ESL thinking. Bernadette Maher describes a typical day for postprimary ESL learners as the basis for some suggestions on dealing with teaching/learning problems faced by all their teachers. Jenny Davies and Elizabeth Adeney describe a coordinated program based on a language-conscious approach to postprimary science teaching with TESL back-up. Nola Philip's plan for a lesson within a series in a postprimary ESL/Social Studies program illustrates some characteristic TESOL approaches to teaching and learning and the layers of planning that specialist teachers do. Sandra Bouwmans excerpts some questioning strategies to encourage successful language learning.

In *TESOL Talk*, we present extracts from Ruth Wajnryb's conversation with Ben Taaffe, an experienced mainstream English teacher who recently retrained in TESOL and began teaching groups of ESL students.

TESOL Reviewer looks at a diverse selection of books on language teaching, some social studies content materials for TESOL teaching, language in Koori education, and integrated language development in multilingual classes.

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TESOL Resources provides an annotated list of some very relevant practical publications, videos, teaching materials and teacher development materials produced in recent years around the country.

Our *TESOL Troubleshooter* offers some suggestions in response to queries about some of the problems often faced by TESOL in mainstream school settings.

The implications of the ALL Project's Principles of Teaching and Learning Language provide a basis for a checklist for teachers to assess the effectiveness of their teaching from a language point of view.

A grant from the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training has enabled ACTA to publish this first issue for distribution free to all primary and secondary schools with ESL programs as well as to all members of ACTA associations. ACTA has a commitment to the Commonwealth to establish a strong focus on TESOL language education in the school context but we welcome articles from all sectors, especially material with general appeal. We believe that as TESOL professionals we need to broaden our horizons and learn from each other. The quality of subsequent issues will depend absolutely on your support through your contributions of articles and materials.

If you are not a current financial member of an ACTA association, please join today to continue to receive free copies of the journal or make use of the subscription form supplied and send it to us as soon as you can. Guidelines for Contributors are inside the front cover and we hope you will feel inspired to share your ideas with colleagues.

The theme planned for the **next issue is TESOL, literacy and literature,** and the theme of the **third issue is to be assessment in TESOL.** We are also planning an issue focusing particularly on **teaching and learning spoken English.** Contributions on these themes in particular and on other relevant topics should be forwarded to the Editor as soon a possible. We particularly hope to publish solid, practical articles by primary and secondary teachers. The deadline for copy for the next issue is 28 September 1990.

We do hope to continue to be able to produce a publication with articles from all over Australia for a nationwide audience. So the challenge goes out to you, our colleagues in all the states and territories, to share your contributions.

Glossary

For our non-specialist readers, here is a brief list of commonly used terms and acronyms:

AMEP *Adult Migrant Education Program* is the title of the Commonwealth-funded English-language teaching program for adult immigrants in Australia.

ELICOS *English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students* is the term for short courses for overseas fee-paying students in Australia.

ESL STUDENTS*English as a Second Language Students* are very diverse in terms of their life, language, cultural and learning experience. Their needs are similarly diverse. Primary and secondary ESL students include:

- children beginning school in Australia at the usual commencement age who have had little or no exposure to English, being recently arrived immigrants or Australian-born children whose home language may be a language other than English, in which they may have some literacy;
- children beginning school in Australia at the usual commencement age who are acquiring English and another language simultaneously at home;
- students starting school in Australia after the usual commencement age without any previous schooling in any country, with little or no English and little or no literacy in their first language, but possibly with work or military experience;
- students starting school after the usual commencement age but with severely disrupted schooling;
- students who arrive from overseas with about the equivalent amount of schooling in their first language as their peers have had in English. Some may have had some experience of learning English as a Foreign or Second Language overseas;
- students (many of whom are Australian-born) who have had the major part of their schooling in Australia but who need assistance to meet the English language demands of mainstream classes;
- students from non-English speaking backgrounds who have specific learning difficulties.

ESL students vary in their proficiency in English. Five levels of proficiency in English for non-English speaking background students were identified by Campbell and McMeniman in their 1985 report *Bridging the Gap* for the Commonwealth Schools Commission:

Level 1 Minimal or no English as a Second Language proficiency
Level 2 Elementary ESL
Level 3 Intermediate ESL: the spoken English of these students gives an impression of problem-free fluency, but their reading proficiency is below their age level and their written work shows problems with task comprehension and written expression. Some secondary students may have stronger literacy skills than oral proficiency.
Level 4 Advanced ESL: students at this level can use English effectively in listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks within a limited range of topics and conceptual complexity, but not all school tasks. They are intellectually able, but have not yet mastered the language of abstract thought and specific subjects.
Level 5 Very Advanced ESL: these students can use spoken and written English effectively for a very wide range of topics and conceptual complexity and can handle the subtleties of humour, innuendo, cultural references and the like in English.

LOTE *Languages Other Than English*, a general term used in Australia to cover all languages.

NESB *Non-English Speaking Background* is used to describe people and communities whose first language is a language other than English.

TEFL *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* is used to describe teaching English usually as a branch of study rather than as the language of instruction to overseas learners in or from non-English speaking countries.

TESL *Teaching English as a Second Language* is the widely used term for teaching English to non-English speaking background immigrants and their children in Australia, especially at school level, to empower them to participate in Australian society and public life. ESL students here are mostly taught in English.

TESOL *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* covers both TESL and TEFL and the whole range of language and sociocultural contexts in which teaching takes place. It recognises that learners may speak more than one other language or that they may be acquiring English simultaneously with another language. It also recognises that the dominance of each language in the learner's repertoire may change over time.

TESOL PERSPECTIVES

What is so special about TESOL anyway?

Tony Ferguson explores the difference between TESOL and "just good", effective, mainstream teaching.

The current official policy of mainstreaming ESL (Campbell and McMeniman, 1985) and the planning for common English and other studies for English-speaking background learners and speakers of other languages in some areas has focused questioning on what is different about TESOL and the assumptions and activities of teachers of ESOL. Is it just working with small groups or individuals or supporting learners who speak another language? Is it only supporting or in-servicing mainstream teachers?

We suggest that three things make the work of teachers of ESOL distinctive: firstly, the knowledge we bring to the task as a result of our training and developing experience; secondly our approach to curriculum and course planning; and thirdly, our language teaching strategies and classroom management techniques.

The Knowledge of the Teacher of ESOL

What teachers of ESOL may bring to their teaching from their pre-service training includes understanding about the needs of immigrant students, basic knowledge of the linguistics of English, practical training in the methodology and a range of specific techniques of teaching a second language to students who speak other languages. Teachers who have trained in TESOL at more advanced levels (specialist postgraduate diploma or Bachelor of Education) will have more detailed knowledge of the social, political and economic context of immigration, and its educational, cultural, policy and curriculum implications; issues of language in social context and culture; the nature of language and first and second language and literacy acquisition and learning in bi- or multilingual settings in Australia; the linguistics of English for second language teaching purposes; more advanced methodology and teaching techniques developed through both academic study and supervised practical teaching.

The experience of working with speakers of other languages may give ESOL teachers particular insights into interactive language and content teaching and learning, the experience of immigrants and refugees in society and knowledge about particular groups of people.

TESOL Approaches to Curriculum and Course Planning

In curriculum and course planning TESOL-trained teachers consider content derived from an analysis of students' personal, educational, vocational and communicative or interactional needs as immigrant or refugee learners of English as a second language at particular levels or stages of development. Groups of learners are identified, not for labelling but for thorough needs analysis and program planning. We understand that a language is a tool for getting things done in the real world and thus that beginners and recent arrivals will urgently need "survival" English for daily living purposes in school and in other aspects of their lives. They also need to learn how to communicate socially in English with schoolmates and other people. They need thirdly to learn the English necessary to learn in English in all their subjects in the mainstream curriculum. This means that, for example, texts used in TESOL settings will include material from other subject disciplines as well as the kinds of personal content, literary material and current issues in the media studied in mainstream English. Other subject-specific language and tasks are planned for. These learning tasks may well need to be supported over periods of several years.

For particular students of different ages and life situations, these needs may be characterised and prioritised in very particular ways that may vary from the content of mainstream English curricula at particular levels. Examples from non-school settings can be found in the various curriculum frameworks developed for the Adult Migrant Education Program (Nunan and Burton, 1985). At the school level, ongoing sociolinguistic profiling is being developed as the initial step in a detailed, specific process of planning curriculum content and language that can be applied across the curriculum (Greco and Raso, 1989).

Teachers of ESOL are aware that the ability to communicate socially in English in conversation in class or in the playground does not necessarily indicate that the student has a command of the highly formalised, complex, abstract language and cultural knowledge usually needed to understand teacher talk, textbooks, reference materials and class notes in various school subjects, to read novels and other literature in English classes and to take part in class discussions, to plan, research and write up projects, assignments, various kinds of essays and other work requirements and to do tests and examinations. Australian teaching methods, forms of classroom organisation and expectations of students' learning are partly culturally determined and often unfamiliar, so ESL students need opportunities to understand, adapt to and practise them. They may often benefit from a structured approach to learning to manage their own learning.

Principled TESOL curriculum planning also takes into account evolving insights from both first and second language acquisition research in addition to general learning theory so that the curriculum can be designed to support the acquisition process going on in and outside the class. (Although there is no definitive answer on the question from the research, it seems that acquiring a second language is in some ways

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like acquiring our first language, but is very different in other, significant ways). The content for TESOL curriculum also derives from knowledge about English and English language learning: including the formal systems of pragmatics, spoken and written discourse, phonology, grammar, semantics, vocabulary, and the culture of Australian English. As well as formal correctness, TESOL aims at social appropriateness, clarity and cultural and linguistic authenticity.

Accordingly TESOL curriculum and approaches to teaching deliberately focus on English language forms, skills and strategies in a variety of ways appropriate to the second language learner as well as the learning of concepts. Specific vocabulary, grammatical structures and concepts are explicitly targeted, together with the discourse forms, text structures or genres, including logical connectives, used in various school subjects. All the elements have to be combined into a systematically developed program.

TESOL Strategies and Classroom Management

One of the most distinctive features of the way teachers of ESOL teach is probably our use of *comprehensible input*. When we talk with students, when we introduce lessons, when we model or demonstrate for them and when we provide materials and resources, when we give them feedback on their use of English and their learning, our use of English is pitched at a level which is not too difficult for the particular students to understand but which is challenging enough to extend their English a little at a time. We do this by noticing the English our students use, by tuning in to the feedback they give us. We constantly question and check comprehension and give students plenty of time and opportunity to talk and respond. We notice if what we say is too hard and we simplify it or paraphrase it accordingly. We usually do this in the course of conversation or working with students on tasks, and we may record samples of students' talk, reading and writing for more formal analysis. It is like the way parents talk quietly with very young children (except that it is also adapted to the students' age and maturity). Some people in the general community do something similar in the very sensitive and skilled way they communicate with immigrants, in the workplace for example, and with foreigners.

We make our input comprehensible to the particular students we are working with in terms of the level of English we are using and the content and meanings we want to communicate. We consider students' existing knowledge and experience as individual learners, as immigrants or refugees or the children of immigrants in Australia, as speakers of their other languages and as participants in particular cultures. When selecting texts, teachers of ESOL consider whether they are readable and understandable in linguistic terms and also culturally appropriate and inclusive. We look for texts which reflect the experience of our students or provide a bridge for understanding and participating in our society.

In teaching beginners and other students in the earlier and intermediate stages of learning English, teachers of ESOL will always begin with *spoken* English. We focus on teaching learners to listen and understand and speak the language, to understand and talk about concepts, and use their developing competence in spoken English as the basis for teaching reading and writing in English. We tend to use a lot more discussion and exploratory talk by students before asking them to read and write. This sequence can be observed at both curriculum or syllabus level and in individual lessons. This approach often distinguishes TESOL from some approaches to literacy teaching for English-speaking learners and general mainstream teaching.

In approaching any topic or activity for TESOL, we work out ways of *presenting and clarifying the concepts through visual, concrete and familiar contexts.* There are a number of particular ways of doing this, the most elaborate of which is Bill Cleland and Ruth Evans' Topic Approach (1984, 1985, 1987) to using subject content material to teach English. Initial presentations use pictures, models, demonstrations, unlabelled diagrams and the like, together with techniques such as the Silent Way to elicit talk from students. Having thus established understanding of the concepts, we then teach the formal language to express the ideas before introducing reading and written work, and then guide students through systematic language work on the topic as a basis for more elaborate reading and writing. Characteristically, the visual and concrete material is kept on hand at all times as a context and reference point for work on the topic. Other teachers of ESOL habitually use various techniques for guiding students in grasping key concepts, predicting, understanding and using new or difficult vocabulary and grammar before (and after) reading a text, watching a video or listening to a lecture. We provide contextual clues to meaning so that we do not have to spend too much time explaining in words, especially as verbal explanation often merely adds to the confusion.

Teachers of ESOL tend to provide for much more explicit *modelling* of English for students whether it be at the level of structuring essays or stories, writing paragraphs and sentences, or grammatical structures, vocabulary or pronunciation of sounds, stress and intonation patterns. The modelling is followed by *guided practice* and use in a variety of systematic, often intensive, ways.

Classes in TESOL focus on students learning English by communicating meanings in English with peers and teachers. We make certain that students have to use English to interact with others, something which does not necessarily happen in mainstream settings in spite of the best will in the world (Ferguson, 1989). There is particular emphasis on pair work with a partner, small-group work and guided and gradual opportunities to use English in more public settings, and students get more chances for both receptive and productive use of English.

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Small group and separate TESOL classes are often used to provide the uninhibiting, unthreatening, supportive setting for trying out and using the second language that language learners, especially older students, require to succeed. In such settings they can build confidence and skills in a way that is not possible in the earlier stages in larger mainstream classes, especially for adolescent learners or for students with certain backgrounds.

While TESOL-trained teachers share a great deal with our mainstream colleagues, our specialist knowledge, roles and experience lead us to focus in particular ways on analysing and responding to students' needs in curriculum and lesson planning, empowering teaching and learning strategies, and on specific linguistic content from a second language point of view.

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TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND ESL IN THE MAINSTREAM

Andrew Kay

An ESL teacher colleague recently told me of a friend, an English Senior in a large metropolitan high school, who had always shown a somewhat derogatory attitude towards the work of ESL teachers. The English teacher participated in one of the ESL in the Mainstream courses during 1989 and as a result her attitude was transformed. She now sees the contribution ESL can make to her work.

1990, International Literacy Year, is a good time for ESL professionals to assert our expertise in the area of literacy and learning. Learning in school is language learning. We have expertise in how people learn language, and the things we know about second language learning are widely applicable in the general school curriculum with both first and second language learners.

This paper discusses views presented in the South Australian *ESL in the Mainstream Course* of some ways classroom teachers in schools can support students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Some of these ways are relevant mainly to this particular group but most of them are relevant to the language and literacy development of all students. They are not all ideas which are solely owned by the ESL field. Approaches to literacy and learning designed for first language students, particularly approaches from the field of *Learning Strategies* and from the *Genre Writing* school have been adopted or adapted in the course. The task for the ESL field is to assert, or re-assert, the value of these supports and to use our positions in the schools to help teachers implement them.

The *ESL in the Mainstream Teacher Development Course* is an inservice program of ten sessions (10 x half days) for ESL and mainstream teachers in both primary and secondary schools.

The main supports for ESL learners advocated by the Course are:

1. Conceptual Supports - i.e. use of teaching and learning strategies which support students in understanding new concepts, relating new and existing knowledge and organising ideas.

2. Explicit focus on language form i.e. use of a range of strategies which develop students' control over language structures especially at the level of whole texts and especially strategies which make clear the particular types of text needed for particular contexts.

3. Giving students the opportunity to practise and use language communicatively in school contexts.

4. Making courses, resources, teaching approaches and the whole learning environment culturally inclusive.

5. Integrating the work of the ESL specialist teachers with that of their colleagues across the school.

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1. Conceptual supports

Cummins and Swain (1986) point out that much of the teaching/learning activity in schools uses language which is 'context-reduced' or lacking in the contextual support which could help to clarify meaning. One of the well known predilections of teachers, as a group, is to hold the floor, to talk too much and to show or involve the learner too little. Apart from listening to monologues, students also work on exercises (or perhaps 'processes' in the modern classroom) where reading and writing are again relatively de-contextualised and the main activity is a one-to-one relationship between the text and the student's head.

It is well understood that in both first and second language learning, the presence of non-verbal contextual information is an essential support for the learner. Now we can not always expect mainstream content teachers to provide all of the pictures, demonstrations, samples, charts, gestures, discussions that an ESL learner might need, but there is ample room for most teachers to move further away from the context-reduced extreme and closer to the context-embedded end of the continuum. This is one message of the ESL in the Mainstream Course.

However there is another probably more useful set of supports for the learning of concepts, in addition to the simple notion of increased contextualisation. These are derived from the field of learning strategies/study skills. They are activities for the classroom which both aid the immediate learning task and equip students with the skills to manage their own learning more effectively in the longterm. They include, for example, activities which:

- activate existing knowledge of a topic
- organise existing knowledge of a topic
- organise new information
- relate graphic and textual forms of information
- plan ways of presenting information
- develop collaborative learning skills

Chamot and O'Malley (1987; 240) argue that learning strategies like these, developed for first language speakers, are highly effective with students studying in a second language.

> 'Academic language learning is more effective with learning strategies. Academic language learning among students of English as a second language is governed by some of the same principles that govern reading and problem solving among native English speakers.'

2. Explicit focus on language form

In supporting ESL learners in mainstream classes teachers need to learn something about the formal features of the kinds of language they expect their students to deal with. This knowledge will allow them to be more explicit in describing their expectations to students, to determine whether students know how to produce the kinds of texts expected and, in cases where they do not know, to show them how. To focus on language form does not mean a return to unstimulating, unhelpful and meaningless grammar exercises - parsing sentences - but it does mean that teachers should permit themselves to step back from the message and discuss in a deliberate way, the features of the language vehicle which carries that message, provided that there is a message being conveyed, i.e. provided that the focus on form is done in a context, not in isolation.

Mainstream teachers can not be expected to develop the level of linguistic knowledge of a well-trained ESL specialist but there are some basic features of the kinds of texts used in particular fields of study which teachers can learn more about, particularly with the support of their ESL colleagues. The writings of the proponents of the Genre school are a very useful resource in this area (eg Collerson 1988, Martin 1987, Hammond 1988). The genre school advocates that first language learner students need to be taught how to write in a range of genres. This means giving them the same kinds of explicit focus on language form as the ESL in the Mainstream Project considers to be supportive of ESL learners.

3. Opportunities for the communicative use of the language of school

In the discussion above, of learning strategies, collaborative learning skills are mentioned. These skills are an essential feature of using small group work.

Group work has a number of advantages for ESL learners. It allows them to listen and talk to native speakers or other ESL learners in situations of reduced stress; it allows them to come to their own understanding of a topic by discussing it rather than just listening to the teacher ("talking your way into meaning"); and it can provide situations in which learners have a genuine need to communicate about the subject under study thus encouraging them to practise this specialised type of language. In learning academic language, students are often expected to read and write but in most classrooms they rarely have the opportunity, or the real *need*, to talk in the register of their school subjects. A few successful or confident members of the class will join in whole group discussions but it is only through a well-run program of small group work that all students will have opportunities to use the language of school orally in genuinely communicative circumstances.

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Group work also allows for written activities in the communicative language teaching style. These activities, whether organised around written or oral language use or both, provide a useful addition to the repertoire of the mainstream teacher.

Group work is a teaching approach which is already successful and widely advocated (though less widely used) for first language speakers. One of the aims of this part of the Course is to provide teachers with some insights into ways of making group work successful through teaching students skills and procedures for cooperative learning.

4. Culturally inclusive practices

In order to ensure that a student of say Vietnamese background is fully included in a mathematics class it is not necessary (nor indeed in any way sufficient) to find an example of a famous Vietnamese mathematician who has contributed to the branch of maths under study. There may indeed be one or more, and with diligent research a teacher might be able to find them, but these sorts of references, valuable though they can be, are the window-dressing of culturally inclusive curriculum. The essential measures of whether students are being included or excluded are more ordinary things. They could include whether or not the teacher is aware of the differences between conventions for use of mathematical symbols in Australian and Vietnamese schools; whether examples of say food prices in an exercise include some foods that a South East Asian person might eat; whether home/school communications are being translated; whether the teacher has established that the student has the mathematical techniques prerequisite to the current topic from his/her former schooling experience; whether language is being used in culturally exclusive ways; and whether texts and other resources represent people, situations and ideas in other than purely Anglo-Australian models.

It is an essential feature of good language teaching, and indeed of all good teaching, to develop in the student an affective state conducive to learning. Culturally inclusive practices in education allow students to preserve their self-esteem and to feel positive in their attitudes towards the language and the school system in which they are studying. Inclusive practices also allow students to make use of and build on the learning they bring with them from home, culture, and life experience.

These practices are not just good for students from non-English speaking backgrounds. The same principles apply to inclusion of any groups traditionally disadvantaged by the academic mainstream - girls, working class children, and so on. (And indeed there is no reason why successful middle-class boys should not benefit from a little cultural broadening and from educational practices which take account of the needs and backgrounds of students as individuals rather than as part of a homogeneous group).

5. ESL Teachers

In my 1988 paper on this subject I argued that ESL teachers were not in danger of redundancy as a result of a course like this one because, apart from the major commitment of teachers required for direct teaching with more recently arrived or beginning ESL learners, the task of bringing ESL approaches into the mainstream curriculum was

a) a long-term one to say the least, and

b) only part of the means of meeting the needs of NESB students anyway.

Today, having provided a basic inservice training course to about five hundred teachers in South Australia, the ESL in the Mainstream Project finds that ESL teachers, far from being unwanted and redundant, are often more effective, better integrated in their schools and more in demand.

To provide a really adequate education for non-English speaking background students, there is a need for relatively high levels of ESL support. Second language acquisition researchers including Cummins and Swain (1986) and Collier (1987, 1989), have pointed to the complex and long-term nature of the process of learning a second language. Becoming a competent user of English for our ESL learners is not a one-off event. As fast as they develop their control of the language their native speaker peers are also adding to their own language resources so that the ESL learner is constantly chasing a moving target. Students starting to learn English in the early primary years will attain a high level of basic interpersonal communication skill in a few years but academic language skills take many more years to develop. For students beginning in English at senior secondary level the need for ESL support is even greater because, although they bring a well-developed body of language knowledge and world knowledge from their first language, they have less time and hence a greater urgency of need for the English proficiency required to complete their schooling.

To assert that a short training program for mainstream teachers, valuable though this is, can adequately meet the needs of ESL learners is clearly an untenable position.

ESL programs in South Australian schools work in a variety of ways but the ESL in the Mainstream Course and the ESL Curriculum Project of which it is a part are developing models which improve the status and effectiveness of the ESL specialist. The materials being developed by the project stress both direct teaching where appropriate (preferably in scheduled classes if in secondary schools) and collaborative work involving joint planning, teaching and evaluation with mainstream colleagues. Snow, Met and Genesee (1989) advocate a type of cooperative work where the ESL teacher plans a language program based on both the language needs of the learners and the kinds of language teaching objectives which would be compatible with the content of a particular area of the mainstream curriculum. For this or other kinds of cooperative planning to work, it is essential to have a close and successful working relationship between ESL and mainstream colleagues. The simple fact that the ESL in the Mainstream Course requires ESL teachers to attend courses together with their colleagues, combined with the sorts of collaborative learning and research activities which they do in the course, has resulted in important progress in this direction in the schools where teachers have done the course.

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Conclusion

The ESL in the Mainstream Course in South Australia is a major ongoing attempt to influence the ways schools respond to the needs of NESB students. Course evaluation forms show a high level of positive response from teachers who have taken the course. Longer-term evaluation, currently in progress, will look at how much lasting change is occurring in schools as a result of the course. Initial results seem to be indicating that the course is achieving its aims : i.e. not to replace ESL teacher provision but to complement it with a whole school and classroom environment in which language learning is supported and cultural diversity is treated as a positive advantage.

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Content-Based Language Instruction : Helping ESL/EFL students with language and study skills at tertiary level.

Colin Beasley describes an adjunct program at Murdoch University, Western Australia. Many of the study requirements and learning needs of students outlined by Colin apply particularly to the senior levels of postprimary schools too. This article was edited from a paper presented at the QATESOL 'Babies and Bathwater: Trends in TESOL' Conference held in Brisbane in June 1989.

In recent years increasing numbers of students from non-English language and cultural backgrounds have been enrolling in Australian tertiary institutions. Although there are considerable differences in the educational and language backgrounds of these students, they are in the main from non-Western cultural traditions and often display a number of common language and learning problems in adjusting to the demands of studying in English at tertiary level in Australia.

The Learning Skills program at Murdoch University, Western Australia, aims to integrate the language and learning skills assistance it provides to tertiary students both native and non-native speakers of English - with students' course content. This paper briefly explores some of the common language and learning problems of students for whom English is a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) and ways of overcoming them. The Learning Skills program at Murdoch will also be explored in detail, including the limits and effectiveness of this approach.

Language Problems:

Saville-Troike (1984) maintains that vocabulary knowledge is the single most important area of second language competence when learning content through that language is the dependent variable. Indeed non-native English speaking students experience difficulties with non-technical vocabulary when reading academic texts. A second language learner recounts:

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> **During the last few days I had to read several (about 150) pages for my psychology exam. I had great difficulties in understanding the material.** There are dozens, maybe hundreds of words I'm unfamiliar with. It's not the actual scientific terms (such as "repression," schizophrenia," "psychosis," or "neurosis") that make the reading so hard, but it's descriptive and elaborating terms (e.g., "to coax," "gnawing discomfort," "remnants," "fervent appeal,") instead. To understand the text fully, it often takes more than an hour to read just ten pages. And even then I still didn't look up all the words I didn't understand. It is a very frustrating thing to read these kinds of texts, because one feels incredibly ignorant and stupid.
>
> (Spack 1988)

Furthermore a wide vocabulary knowledge is no less important in academic writing. In a study of academics' evaluation of non-native speakers' essay writing, Santos (1988) found that word choice was treated as the most serious error type because when the wrong word is used the meaning is very likely to be obscured (Santos, 1988:84). The pedagogical implications of Santos' study include the need for closer attention to vocabulary building and word selection in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programmes.

Many non-native speakers have difficulty reading English texts and doing written assignments because of an inadequate grasp of patterns of rhetorical organisation and the various cohesive devices necessary for coherent prose. Cooper comments that:

> Many students can write grammatically correct sentences but fail to progress because they are unable to organize their ideas in a manner acceptable to an English reader. Similarly, though they understand individual sentences, students fail to comprehend extended pieces of writing because they are unable to see the organisation of the ideas.
>
> (Cooper, 1979: vi)

Cohen et al. (1979) found that foreign students studying in English often did not identify and understand 'conjunctive words signalling cohesion, not even the more basic ones like *however* and *thus*' (p 160) in their Science and Economics texts. These researchers argued that non-native speakers read more "locally" than native speakers and because they don't always attend to connectives, they have trouble synthesising the information in sentences and from one sentence to another as well as across paragraphs.

ESL/EFL students also experience difficulties with the register of academic prose. Swan (1989) analysed students' writing problems at tertiary level in terms of misunderstanding important features of expository texts: namely, the tendency to turn verbs and adjectives into nouns, the greater use of "empty" relational verbs such as *include, be, constitute*, the impersonal style (using the third person, passive constructions, the existential form *there is / are*), qualification (using verb phrases - especially modals - and adverbs such as *may well, appears to, apparently, probably*), limited use of dependent clauses and tendency to reduce relative clauses to participial phrases, and higher word density (greater number of complex noun phrases).

Indeed, Cohen et al. (1979) found that EFL students often have trouble comprehending complex noun phrases when reading academic texts. For example, the highlighted sixteen-word noun phrase was problematic for students studying this genetic text:

> Thus, it was conjectured that **such treatments as holding cells in buffer after irradiation before placing them on nutrient agar plates** might function by inhibiting normal growth processes while repair systems completed their task.

Other common language problems include tenses (accuracy and consistency), faulty concepts of a sentence ("run-ons", "fragments"), word order, parallel structure (linking two or more ideas in non-grammatically parallel ways), agreement or concord (subject and verb, pronouns and nouns, singular or plural), articles (*the, a / an*), countable or uncountable nouns, and prepositions.

A survey conducted by Ostler (1980) of the academic needs of advanced ESL students revealed that undergraduate and post-graduate students both needed more work on summary skills. In addition, although students felt comfortable in some settings such as transactions where they could employ "formulaic skills" which were "limited to topic and conditioned by setting", many had problems in social conversation.

Study/Learning Problems

As Ballard & Clanchy (1984) point out, students who study abroad usually expect some problems with lack of English fluency and accuracy and adjusting to living in a foreign culture, but fail to anticipate "the need to change habits of thinking, studying and learning to suit the demands of the foreign education system" (p7). In their survey of Thai, Indonesian and Malaysian students studying in Australia, Bradley and Bradley (1984) point out that culture-specific educational differences such as attitude to teachers, attitude to study material, preservation of "face" and pattern of assessment can all create potential problems. South East Asian students are not used to disagreeing with their teacher and are usually very deferential.

> Often the expectations of Australian lecturers are very different to those of the teaching staff in their home countries. Overseas students often have trouble adjusting to a situation where mere regurgitation of lecture material is unacceptable and thoughtful disagreement is welcomed . . . Many overseas students believe deference is the most important aspect (Academic, Melbourne University).
>
> (McEvedy, 1987)

While all students need to make adjustments in learning approach in the transition from high school to university, overseas students from Asian countries usually experience greater problems than Australians. Students from most Asian educational systems are trained almost exclusively to be reproductive, to memorize and imitate rather than to be analytical and to question, discuss and develop view points of their own.

> Most Asian students, especially those from Thailand and Indonesia have been conditioned to regard everything printed in a book as the truth; so when one book contradicts another, an unfamiliar and undesirable conflict arises.
>
> (Bradley & Bradley, 1984:271)

It is not surprising then that South East Asian students have study skills problems related to lack of experience in lecture note taking, tutorial and laboratory participation, staff-student contact, academic essay writing and reading. Lack of cultural background knowledge of Australia and the social, political and legal system as well as unfamiliarity with Australian English (particularly Australian accents) can pose additional comprehension problems for many students at first, but these problems are usually conquered fairly rapidly.

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Another cultural factor - the preservation of *face*, of not being *humiliated* by being proved wrong or inept in front of one's teacher or peers, especially in a second or foreign language - results in many students preferring to remain completely silent in tutorials and refusing to venture any opinions. Bradley & Bradley's (1984) study revealed that 22% of overseas students reportedly never said anything in tutorials (although some of these students were "among the more fluent speakers of English" in the study).

A further problem involves cultural variation in writing and thinking styles. Students are expected to present their arguments in the English tradition of the strictly linear "logical" development of ideas. Essays are supposed to have an introduction which defines any terms, the scope and focus and the theme or thesis of the essay as well as an outline of the structure or main points to be covered. The body develops in full the points outlined in the introduction (with a minimum of "irrelevancies") and the essay is rounded off with a conclusion which briefly summarizes the main points and theme of the essay. There are clearly differing rhetorical traditions between cultures involving differing perceptions of reader and writer responsibilities (Chinese, Korean and Japanese apparently placing far greater emphasis on the reader's responsibility to interpret the writer's implied message) as well as different patterns of ordering and structuring information.

The Western tradition places great emphasis on comparing, discussing and evaluating alternative arguments, students being expected to express and justify a viewpoint, rather than stringing together a series of presumably authoritative quotes or semi-quotes from text books (Bradley & Bradley, 1984:283). In the words of an academic from Melbourne University:

> ... one of the most important qualities needed by a student to succeed is an ability to think logically and to develop a theme in a logical way with provision of appropriate 'continuity'. A student fluent in English but who lacks the insight and ability to do this could well struggle to obtain a degree so that I must rate fluency in English as less important than having a logical mind and the ability to appraise critically what is read or taught. Of course, if English expression is too poor to permit the student to state sufficiently clearly what he/she means, or to get down on paper sufficient information within a given time, chances of success in study are also poor.
>
> (McEvedy, 1987)

Critical analysis is the expectation, but is very difficult for students who have exclusively practised rote-learning and memorisation, never questioning the teacher or the text.

Indeed as Bradley and Bradley (1984) point out:

> The South East Asian student is accustomed to being told explicitly what to read, and is expected to read that carefully, almost word by word and perhaps even memorise the essential sections which the teacher may identify for him or her .. In many cases each subject in school or even at University would have only one text (p289).

It is not surprising, then, that many Asian students often have poorly developed skimming and scanning skills, as well as little understanding of the conventions of referencing and the seriousness of plagiarism.

English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses for students wishing to pursue higher academic studies in English are an important branch of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) movement. ESP has grown rapidly in the last twenty years as the language teaching profession has attempted to meet the diverse demands of industry, commerce and the professions for English language training for people from other cultures.

The focus in ESP courses is clearly on the learner and meeting the learner's language needs and interests in his/her specialist area of work or study. The assumption behind the approach is that because the courses are clearly relevant to the learner's needs, learners will be motivated and learn better and faster.

EAP courses are often general academic bridging programs designed to prepare students for the demands of later tertiary level study (eg Engineering, Nursing) in English. Another model, the adjunct model, has its roots in the language across the curriculum movement. Adjunct courses are English (ESL) courses which are linked to particular University content courses and provide integrated language instruction (reading, writing and study skills) using the content course materials. As Widdowson (1978) argues, this integration "... not only helps ensure the link with reality and pupils' own experience, but also provides us with the certain means of teaching language as communication, as use rather than simply as usage." Snow and Brinton (1988) describe an adjunct program, the Freshman Summer Program (FSP) at University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), in which students enrol concurrently in a content course such as *Introduction to Psychology* and a language course, the activities of which are centred around the content area's lectures and readings. The courses are both for credit, the language class being 12 -14 hours contact per week and the content course 8 hours of lectures and tutorials. The underlying assumption of the approach is that:

> Student motivation in the language class will increase in direct proportion to the relevance of its activities, and in turn student success in the content course will reflect the carefully co-ordinated efforts of this team approach.
>
> (Snow and Brinton, 1988)

Student evaluation of the adjunct program was overall very positive regarding skills development and had the reported additional benefits of increasing students' self confidence and ability to use UCLA facilities (ibid).

Learning Skills Program (Murdoch University)

Assistance with language and study skills for migrant and foreign students enrolled in a program of study at Murdoch University (shortly to be amalgamated with the University of Western Australia) is provided through the Learning Skills program which is a section of the Educational Services and Teaching Resources (ESTR) Unit of the University. The Learning Skills program has several facets: firstly, adjunct study skills and numeracy for all first year students, with additional language and study skills classes for ESL students; secondly, some general classes appropriate to students from most programs of study; thirdly, a drop in resource centre; and finally, individual

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consultation by appointment. The aims of the program are to develop students' literacy, numeracy and study skills, to make students more effective and independent learners, and to empower them to function successfully in the University system (Marshall, 1989). A corner-stone of the program is a commitment to the integrating of language and study skills instruction with students' course content, as this increases student motivation in developing appropriate skills and also reduces problems of transferring skills to required learning tasks (Marshall, 1989:3). Thus nearly all classes offered are related to a particular University course, with major emphasis on first year foundation or introductory courses. Apart from attempting to integrate process with content, the Learning Skills program has a developmental (rather than remedial) orientation to skills building, and takes into account individual learning styles and previous experiences of learning. It also acknowledges the importance of differing purposes for learning, and encourages peer learning (Marshall, 1989).

Figure 1 below lists the literacy, numeracy and study skills typically covered in classes run with one of the broad inter-disciplinary foundation courses all first year Murdoch students are required to complete as a general introduction to tertiary study.

Learning Skills tutors are also mainstream content tutors in one of the foundation courses, so they are completely conversant with the intellectual demands (readings and lectures) and requirements (assignments and assessment) of the course and usually attend course lectures. Regular tutors' meetings are held for both learning skills and content tutors to discuss the program and any problems.

As well as the above learning skills classes for *all* students, students for whom English is a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) are offered extra classes (one and a half hours per week) to help with specific language and study difficulties with the course content.

There is substantial variation in the language and cultural problems overseas and migrant students demonstrate, however, depending on their precise background. Some students have had the majority of their schooling in English, while others have had comparatively little, and many of the overseas students from Singapore and sponsored African students speak a variety of English as a first language.

Figure 1 Learning Skills: tasks covered in tutorials

Literacy and Study Skills	**Numeracy Skills**	**Science Skills**
Essay Writing - choosing and defining a topic - research - editing drafts		
Report Writing - using experimental notes - using literature	- measuring - tabulating results - graphs - statistics - modelling	- developing a hypothesis - planning an experiment - interpreting results - observation skills - recording observations
Reading - previewing books/chapters/articles - reading in depth - note-making	- reading and understanding numerical content	
Summarising - paragraphing - quoting - plagiarism	- summarising using pictures, graphs, diagrams	
Using the Library		
Studying - timetabling - being organized - setting goals - remembering information - concentration - exam techniques		
Tutorials - participation		
Lecture Note-taking	- recording numerical information	

(Marshall, 1989)

ESL classes in 1989 were offered for each of the Foundation courses with class numbers varying from a small group of half a dozen or less to a large tutorial (15-20). ESL classes for foundation courses closely follow the lectures and readings of the content course. They provide an opportunity to review and clarify "difficult" or puzzling lectures and reading, and to build vocabulary and important background cultural knowledge. Furthermore, reading and writing skills are progressively developed in synchronisation with the tutorial and assignment schedule for the course and course text books. Expectations of academics regarding essay and assignment writing are examined in relation to guidelines spelt out in the course guide and the criteria listed on the assignment marking sheets. If possible sections of students' actual assignments are workshopped in these sessions - anonymously and with students' consent - to refine student's skills at drafting and editing essays. Particular attention is paid to defining the essay topic, the structure of introductions and conclusions and the "logical development" of ideas in English.

Because of the many other demands on students undertaking a full program of study and the difficulty of time-tabling classes, sessions have been limited to between one and two hours per week. This, of course, places severe limits on the depth and effectiveness of language assistance possible, sessions tending to concentrate on helping with immediate problems such as assignments and exams. Spack (1998) in an attack on the ESP approach lists a number of problems including the difficulty of having a carefully planned pedagogical or rhetorical rationale when it (the language course) is dependent on another course content.

Spack (1988) argues that in ESP programs false expectations can be raised amongst both staff and students, with language teachers possibly finding themselves in the uncomfortable position of being less knowledgeable than their students. It must be admitted that one does sometimes feel cast in the impossible role of "miracle worker" and expert "Mister Fix-It", and at times an ESL instructor does tread "dangerous ground" in attempting to discuss ideas without a great depth of knowledge in an area. However, the broad interdisciplinary foundation courses at Murdoch are an ideal vehicle for the "generalist" knowledge base of a language

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teacher, especially when that teacher also has the experience of being a mainstream content tutor on that course as well. For more specialized courses, it is essential to team teach, but as Coffey (1984) observes this is possible "only where there is a high level of goodwill and mutual interest and understanding".

Some more specialised Murdoch university courses with significant numbers of non-native English speakers, notably Principles of Commercial Law, have seen the development of ESL adjunct classes and workshops over the past couple of years. This has always involved the course lecturer or co-ordinator team teaching with the ESL specialist and thankfully, "a high level of goodwill... and understanding". The emphasis in the early sessions is on building up basic legal vocabulary and background knowledge of the Australian legal system. Later sessions develop reading skills, making sense of the complicated structure of legal English as well as reviewing basic concepts and vocabulary of the course. Techniques for analysing law problem questions and structuring answers are emphasized in the latter part of the program.

Clearly, the ESP/adjunct approach does demand a lot in terms of planning and liaison with content staff specialists. ESL tutors have to attend lectures, read and analyse course texts and

> ...juggle the demands of their language syllabus with the constraints and added dimensions placed on it by the demands of the content course and attempt to resolve possible disparities between these to the best of their abilities.
>
> (Snow & Brinton, 1988)

The voluntary, non-credit bearing nature of Learning Skills courses can be problematic in that it promotes the view that the classes are peripheral and low in status and therefore a waste of time. Many students feel that because they have succeeded at high school and have now gained admission to University that they already possess all the study skills and knowledge required to succeed. Indeed, for some students to admit that they are having problems and need to seek assistance from Learning Skills tutors involves a considerable loss of face amongst their peers. It is usually the weakest students who are the first to drop out of Learning Skills classes in their bid to have more time to keep up with the content demands that are overwhelming them. Furthermore, attendance at all ESL and Learning Skills classes usually follows definite peaks and troughs that relate to assignment deadlines and exam pressure.

Students may also arrange individual consultations with Learning Skills tutors by appointment. They mostly seek help over written assignments, numeracy problems, oral presentations and occasionally, personal problems. Just as it is almost impossible to separate language and content in teaching it is often also extremely difficult to clearly delineate the boundaries of one's role. Care is needed not to lose sight of one's fundamental role as teacher of language and study skills and to recognise the limits of one's competence and responsibility in other areas. It is then often necessary to admit that a question or problem is outside one's area and to refer the student on to his/her lecturer, course co-ordinator, or student counsellor.

Conclusion

It is clear that unless students' existing proficiency in English is of a quite high standard, they will experience great difficulty in succeeding in tertiary studies. Particular problems include reading and writing skills and the difficulty of adjusting to Western educational traditions which stress independent learning, critical analysis, and the linear development of ideas. Vocabulary knowledge is of paramount importance in both reading and writing at advanced levels as are the development of effective reading strategies such as previewing, skimming, scanning and word recognition by derivation and context. An understanding of the rhetorical organisation of academic texts, the importance of cohesive devices, and the way ideas are linked together in English are equally necessary, as are highly developed summary and note taking skills and an understanding of the style and conventions of academic writing particularly concerning referencing and plagiarism. These areas are the focus of the language assistance given to ESL/EFL students through ESL classes at Murdoch University that deal with course readings and content.

The fundamental approach of the Learning Skills program is to integrate the development of appropriate language and study skills with the learning of course content. The program, thus, follows the adjunct model and is underpinned by the notion that the clear relevance of material and activities dealt with improves motivation and helps ensure the successful development of learning skills. The approach can justifiably be claimed to be a successful and fruitful one on the basis of attendance figures and the predominantly positive feedback from students.

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PracTESOL

When nature needs some help ! The natural learning approach and the teaching of ESL in the primary school.

Chris Davison looks at how effectively the natural learning approach meets the cultural, linguistic and learning needs of ESL students. By allowing the reader to compare samples from two schools' work programs and language policies, she compares mainstream natural learning and ESL approaches and suggests a possible reconciliation.

It seems as if an increasing number of primary teachers are now firm followers of the natural learning approach and a good thing too, generally speaking. Combined with a whole language approach, "natural learning" is based upon the way young children appear to acquire oral language very easily and naturally when continually exposed to other speakers of the language using it in a meaningful context.

As a classroom teacher explains in *Play on Words* (1988), by experimenting with language and refining their use of it in the light of feedback they receive, children learn how to make language work for them. Writing and reading are natural extensions of this - further ways of communicating information for all kinds of purposes. Not only are the children immersed in oral language, they are surrounded by a stimulating print environment, ranging from labels and game instructions to literature and their own "published" stories.

Many schools have expended a great deal of time, energy and thought developing policies that reflect this new classroom reality.

But how effective is the natural learning approach for ESL students?

In so far as it goes, the natural learning approach supplies a very rich and potentially very rewarding atmosphere for the language development of ESL students.

As the notes with *Play on Words* point out 'the ESL child will learn faster if the language is purposeful and whole in the sense that it conveys meaning, and especially if, it arises from concrete activities where visual clues prompt understanding. And if able speakers of English join in these activities and provide a language model that can be copied, then the ESL learner's progress is likely to be faster still'.

ESL students, however, have special needs that cannot be met by immersion alone, no matter how stimulating the language environment. These needs require a slight re-defining and tighter focusing of the general approach to teaching language used in the primary school. They do not mean throwing away what you are doing already, but rather adding to it and making it even better.

What are the special needs of ESL students?

Many ESL children arrive in the primary school speaking very little or no English. Their first language may be a well-developed standard variety or it may be a mixed, almost pidginised variety of their parents' mother tongue and English, picked up from siblings and peers. They may have some literacy skills in their first language but usually only if they have started school in their country of origin. If they were born in Australia, as is increasingly the case, then, in fact, they are more likely to be beginning literacy in English. In making generalisations about ESL children, it is necessary to be very cautious because they are far from homogeneous and their needs will differ according to their age and background. However, it is possible to identify certain common and interrelated sets of needs that distinguish ESL learners from their Anglo-Australian playmates. These needs can be loosely catergorised into cultural linguistic and learning needs.

Cultural needs

Cultural needs are two-fold, encompassing both the need for more explicit information about and induction into the Anglo-Australian culture, values and socio-political processes and the need to have the students' own ethnolinguistic and sociocultural background supported and explicitly recognized by the broader school community. The curriculum must both help to confirm and legitimise the children's cultural experiences and understandings and, at the same time, challenge and extend those experiences and understandings. It could be argued that Anglo-Australian children have the same needs and that their peer culture is also very different from that of the school. This is true, to an extent. The crucial difference is the width of the gap between the norms and values of the Anglo-Australian community that the school reflects and the ESL child's own culture. This difference tends to be underestimated, even by the most sensitive and aware teachers. The school needs to help bridge this gap and not assume that students will automatically make the connections. Obviously, effective home-school liaison is particularly important as is the provision of multilingual materials. This is the only way to empower ESL students without destroying their self-worth and sense of identity.

Language needs

The language needs of ESL children are both more subtle and yet more obvious than their cultural needs. Language does not exist in isolation. It is very much a product of the cultural conventions and assumptions of the society from which it springs. For example, the Anglo-Australian concern with relevance and directness is manifested in a very linear style of discourse and, to many NESB groups, little subtlety in choice of vocabulary. These differences between language forms mean that ESL children are generally ahead of their peers in one sense, yet behind them in another.

(Cont.)

Unlike the vast majority of Anglo-Australian children, ESL students have the advantage of bilingualism. They come to the learning of English as fluent users of the language they grew up speaking. They know that spoken language is purposeful. They know how to combine a large range of sounds and gestures into meaningful units in order to communicate. They have had years of practice in interpreting quite subtle nuances in their mother tongue. With skillful encouragement, they will bring what they already know about language learning and language use to the second language learning task. Their bilingualism, especially if maintained and developed, will give them greater cognitive and linguistic flexibility. Bilingualism also appears to promote a better understanding of how language in general operates and this knowledge, if shared in the mainstream classroom, will help raise all children's awareness of language.

On the other hand, it is obvious that ESL children are also disadvantaged to the extent that their first language is not the language of the school, nor the medium of teaching, nor, in most cases, an object of instruction. Thus, ESL learners have to acquire a whole new sound system, a new set of words and meanings, a new way of constructing sentences and a new set of discourse patterns. They must learn to express themselves clearly in a language that is appropriate for their age, their situation and their purpose. Unlike their Anglo-Australian peers, ESL learners do not have a sound oral base in English upon which to build their literacy skills and there are likely to be many gaps in their knowledge. At the same time as they are coming to grips with English, they are expected to be learning a range of new, cognitively demanding concepts and skills without the support of the mother tongue.

ESL students cannot be expected to pick up language by osmosis - they need an explicit and planned language program integrated with their general classwork that takes into account their specialised needs and different stages of development. They also need on-going maintenance and development of their mother tongue, preferably through some form of bilingual program.

Learning needs

The learning needs of ESL students are both similar to and different from the needs of their monolingual peers. The *processes* underlying first and second language acquisition are basically the same, thus all children in the class will benefit from a language-rich, relaxed environment and from involvement in activities that give them as many opportunities as possible to use language successfully to interact with others and to communicate in a range of contexts.

However, because ESL children are coming to the learning of English at a much later stage of cognitive and linguistic development and because they have much less exposure to English, they have certain specialised needs.

In terms of classroom procedures, they need much more repetition and practice, more explicit instruction and concept-checking, more careful paraphrasing of difficult vocabulary, more demonstration and modelling, more highly structured and sensitive elicitation of existing knowledge, more opportunities for controlled teacher-student and student-student interaction and more time to absorb the rhythms and patterns of the target language. They need methodical, planned language *development*, not just opportunities for use.

In addition, ESL children often have very different expectations of the teaching-learning process, particularly if they have done some schooling in their country of origin. Teachers need to make the purpose of classroom activities more explicit and provide opportunities for ESL children to share anxieties or reservations about particular teaching styles with bilingual support staff or children who speak the same first language. Many children may be reluctant, for example, to question an adult teacher or to participate in group discussions as these are not appropriate forms of behaviour for a child in their own cultural group.

ESL children may also suffer from language and cultural disorientation and their self-esteem may have been affected by their initially dependent, even infantilised status. They will probably need more reassurance and support with their learning than their Anglo-Australian peers. Again, bilingual assistance will greatly increase student confidence but nothing can take the place of activities which give children a sense of achievement and autonomy.

Some learners, especially recent arrivals, will benefit from regular small group work with the ESL teacher, ideally in association with competent English-speaking peers. The majority of ESL students, however, particularly at the lower end of the school, can be catered for within the mainstream class, provided that the natural learning approach is adapted to take into account their specific needs.

So where are the holes. . . ?

Most whole language programs that follow the principles of natural learning need further development in order to cater effectively for *all* students. Examining actual teaching and talk about teaching is a very concrete and practical way of identifying some of the areas where nature needs help.

Look at the following extracts from two authentic work programs. One comes from an outer suburban primary school with virtually no ESL students, the other from an inner-city school with an enormously diverse mix of ethnic groups. Which is the ESL-modified program?

(Cont.)

WORK PROGRAM: Extract 1

Topic: Cleanliness / Hygiene

- Discussion of ways of keeping clean
- Visit from dentist/doctor
- Ways of brushing your teeth
- Survey of how many times a day we brush our teeth
- Sleep time - Graph of hours
- Ways of cleaning clothes
- Types of clothes we can wear
- Project on clothes
- Research on the roles of people who look after us eg: Dentist Doctor
- Excursion to the dentist's and doctor's
- Survey questions about what to ask a dentist/doctor about his job
- If I was a dentist
- If I was a doctor
- Thank you letters to our guest speakers.

You can see that the two programs approach the planning of the same topic in quite different ways. In the first extract, the teacher has started by listing fairly typical activities associated with the theme of cleanliness and hygiene. The list reflects the teacher's concern to provide very rich and varied input for the children and to incorporate into her planning a range of opportunities for the children to use language for real purposes in authentic communication, for example, to visit the doctor or to thank the guest speakers. The activities are grouped and ordered more or less according to the concepts involved, but there appears to have been no attempt to make these concepts explicit nor to identify the specific language forms that would be needed to carry out the tasks. In a sense, the teacher has planned what the children in her class will *do* but not what they will need to *say* or *write* - the focus of the planning is on using language to do things. It seems to be assumed that the children will pick up the language simply by using it.

The second extract is very different. The teacher appears to have started her planning with a breakdown of the topics that the children will need to be exposed to and her planning of content tends to be much more specific than in the first extract. Some of the topics also tend to look too basic for the Anglo-Australian classroom, for example, a whole topic on good manners or the use of the handkerchief! It is only when you remember that the majority of children in this school are from a very different background that such topic choices appear to make much more sense, as the content of both these topics is also, in many ways, more limited and a lot more time seems to have been allocated to activities.

An even more distinctive feature of this teacher's notes, however, is the emphasis on the language that will be introduced with each topic. The language has been analysed according to its grammatical structure, its function and the specific vocabulary involved. Certain patterns of language are highlighted and repeated, for example, adverbs of frequency and simple present tense. It is clear that the focus of this planning is on language *development*, although still in a highly contextualised way.

WORK PROGRAM: Extract 2 **Topic: Health**

Function	**Suggested Structures**			
	Personal Cleanliness			
Describing **Bathtime** **Describing** **Hair Care** **Identifying** **Clean & Dirty** **Giving reasons for** **Hanky use** **Expressing approval/ disapproval**	**1. Bathtime** Frequency adverbs - often (splash)	**2. Hair care** Frequency adverbs - always - Simple present- brush/comb/wash	**3. Clean hands** Fingernails - these/those	**4. Use of handkerchief** Frequency adverbs - always, never
Describing suitable clothing **Expressing desires & needs** **Expressing satisfaction/ disatisfaction** **Expressing obligation**	**5. Suitable clothing** Time clauses: when it's hot, when it's cold	**6. Importance of sleep** Need/Want	**7. Neat & Tidy appearance** Like/don't like Simple present	**8. Cleanliness of environment** Frequency adverb always/never must & always, never
Expressing social attitudes **Talking about specfic occupations.** **Explaining processes**	**9. Good manners** Always, please - Thank you - May I - I'm sorry - I beg your pardon - Excuse me	**10. Care of teeth** Time phrases- in the morning/ before bed - Frequency adverbs. Irregular nouns - eg tooth/teeth 1st Conditional Comparatives	**11. The dentist** Present simple - 1st Conditional - if we have a toothache we see the dentist Temporal conjuntions When I go - (Simple present).	**12. The doctor** As for Dentist

Now have a look at the following extracts from the language policies of the same schools. **(Cont.)**

LANGUAGE POLICY: Extract 1

Children will learn language when

- they are immersed in and surrounded by language and experiences which are supported by language
- they have language demonstrated to them regularly and are guided towards new ways of communicating through a variety of media
- they are responsible for the appropriateness of their own language
- they are given ample opportunity to employ daily the whole range of language skills
- they are actively engaged in the teaching situation and this engagement is constantly monitored by staff

LANGUAGE POLICY: Extract 2

Children must achieve a standard of communicative competence that will enable them to

- participate and learn within a mainstream classroom
- select appropriate language and mannerisms when communicating and interacting with peers, teachers and other members of the school community
- function adequately within the wider community sphere

The school must recognise the special cognitive needs of those students with interrupted or no previous schooling

It is clear that, while both documents emphasise the need for children to be able to communicate effectively, only the second extract actually talks of *developing* communicative competence.

Again, the focus in the first document appears to be on providing opportunities for language use - it seems to be assumed that language development will then follow naturally. The children are responsible for the appropriateness of their own language and although there is the suggestion that they will be guided, there is little sense of active intervention on the part of the teacher in the language learning process. Rather, the document simply lists conditions for language learning.

In contrast, the second extract evokes a much more conscious and active language learner who is operating in a range of very clearly defined socially constructed contexts. This extract, in fact, has a very powerful social justice orientation that is totally lacking from the first policy document.

These examples highlight crucial differences in emphasis between the two schools. Both at the classroom level and at the whole school level, in policy and in practice, quite different, although easily reconcilable, views of the language learner and the language learning task emerge. The first school focuses on suggesting means to a vaguely-defined end, the second focuses on the ends themselves and the language syllabus that is required to meet these ends.

The rhetoric of the whole language and natural learning approaches tends to suggest that children are doing a lot of language work, but, in many ways, the reality is quite different. Language and learning are taken to be synonymous, that is, if the child is placed in a rich learning environment, he will acquire language. This might be the case for many Anglo-Australian children from literate, middle-class backgrounds but it is clearly mistaken when applied to ESL children. Overgeneralisations of models such as Cambourne's (1988) conditions for language learning fail to take into account the specialised needs of ESL children, thus multiethnic schools find it very difficult to develop their students' natural potential.

A whole language approach that incorporates the principles of natural learning can be modified relatively simply to meet the need of all children but only if schools take a long, hard look at their policies and practices and ask themselves: "Where does nature need a hand?"

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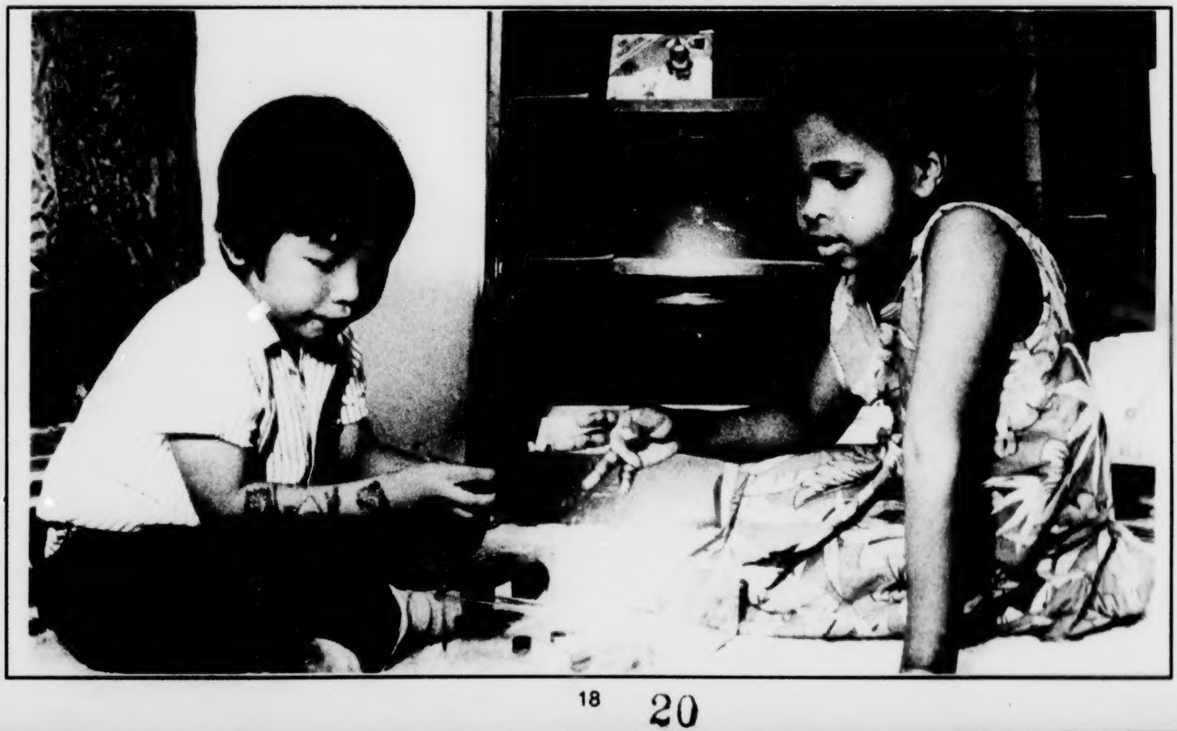


English Language Use in Mainstream Subject Classrooms: Problems and Strategies

Bernadette Maher takes a challenging look at what happens to ESL students in terms of language and learning in a day's experience in a postprimary school and suggests some cross-curricular classroom strategies for using language to stimulate active learning.

Resentment, regret, frustration and failure - all feelings I have experienced when teachers talk about their recently arrived Indo-Chinese students.

"He can't write proper English sentences."

"I can't make head or tail of this work!"

"He's wasting his time being in my class, he's not learning anything."

"I never understand what he's saying or asking me."

I agree that there is truth in these statements, but there are reasons, just as there are ways to change this situation. To determine some of the reasons, I will describe a typical day for any one of the Indo-Chinese students at school. My emphasis is on our attitude to language and its use in our classrooms. From this case study, I shall extract some of the major teaching/learning problems in a table, with a section headed 'Suggestions', indicating ways to overcome or eliminate some of the teachers' difficulties, as well as those of students. To help with the suggestions, I shall discuss language and its importance for learning. Firstly, however, I'd like you to think about the English language as a whole.

Every subject on the timetable uses English as its medium, but if you look a little closer, you will find that there are many styles and varieties of the language itself. Each subject we teach has developed its own spoken and written styles, its own rather specialised jargon to such an extent that, in each subject, we are really using a sub-language of the English language. For our students this means that, as they move from one class to the next, six times a day, each fifty minute time slot is like a separate, unrelated field of study with its own language used by the teacher and the textbook(s). Given this, you cannot expect that each student will learn all these varieties of English in the ESL classes alone. It is up to you, as an expert in your subject, not only to be aware of the particular language of your subject, but to teach it. More importantly, it is our responsibility to encourage these students to use language in order to learn more effectively.

In terms of language and learning, what is a typical day for any one of these students? He gets out of his bed and as he gets ready for school, he chats with his parents and siblings, asks and answers questions, tells them information and farewells them - all in Vietnamese. On his way to school, he walks alone for a time, thinking about the coming day and the classes that he will have, or about the homework he did till late last night. All these thoughts are framed in Vietnamese. Later, when he meets some of his friends, they discuss their news, problems and difficulties with work, teachers, other students. They may make suggestions, give directions, tease, threaten, cajole but whatever language function they use, it is done in their language, Vietnamese, the language in which they feel comfortable, and in which they are very capable.

At 8:20 he arrives at school, meets more of his Vietnamese friends and walks to his locker which is with those of his friends and again, any language he needs or uses, all his thinking, is in Vietnamese. But it is here that, for the first time, he hears English - the other students yelling, verbally jostling or swearing at each other or at him. He does not have to respond; he prefers not to unless he has understood, and is upset by the insult. More often than not, he is unsure as to whether he has correctly interpreted the words, and so doesn't say anything.

At 8:30 he begins the first of six classes for the day. In all of them he sits with his friends, often physically separated from the rest of the class.

Classes usually begin with some organisational and disciplinary instructions from the teacher. He gets through all right because he is not a behaviour problem; he just sits quietly waiting for teaching to begin. The teacher talks about what is to be done in the class, the reading material and the tasks to be completed. Most of this talk goes over his head, because it is said too quickly or the words are more sophisticated or specialised than those in his limited vocabulary. If he gets a chance, he asks one of the other Vietnamese students to explain it for him, otherwise he has to wait until the class starts work and then ask. Probably, if he hasn't understood the teacher's directions, he has also missed most of the explanations and teaching about the material to be worked on. Depending on the time spent on all this, of the fifty minute total, he has only a short time to find out what to do and what the subject matter is about and then to do the work. When the class is actually underway, we often find him asking his friends to explain the written text or the spoken language. He is confronted by lots of words and structures, both oral and written, that are new to him, phrases and colloquialisms, jargon and a style that have no real meaning to him, or that have a different meaning to him, depending on which subject he is in: for example *digit* in Science in Period 1 refers to his finger or toe, but an hour later in mathematics it refers to a number. In the afternoon *batter* in Physical Education has a meaning totally different to that used in Home Economics in the morning. Unless you've taught the meaning of the word as it is used in your particular subject, he can't know it not its meaning. He can consult his dictionary and often does, but usually in vain. Such a small American-English/ Vietnamese dictionary does not contain many variations of meaning.

In most classes, he says nothing in English at all; he only listens and reads and tries to understand in terms of his own past knowledge and language. At recess and lunchtime, he gets a break from these linguistic pressures. In a sporting or social context, he can relax back into his own language with his friends.

(Cont.)

By 3:05, when the last bell rings, he has listened to five or six instances of different subject-based language, has been required to write in several different styles - short, multiple-choice or longer comprehension style questions and answers, descriptive or explanatory paragraphs, mathematical symbolic language, scientific experiment language. He has rarely spoken in English, but in Vietnamese he has thought, and tried to work out the meaning of everything said or written.

As teachers, we consider our material important, relevant, worthwhile and necessary, but the language of our classroom presents in its style, level and particularity, an insurmountable barrier to understanding for most of these students. No wonder then that they don't appear to be learning.

That night, at home, he takes out the material again, gets his dictionary, dog-eared by over-use, and begins again to try to understand the new information of each class and then do the set tasks. It is a typical day but by no means an easy one. If he has a remarkable memory and can memorise all the words with their meanings, this helps. But given that he doesn't ever use these words in his normal speech, in or out of class, they remain alien and non-personal to him. It is not surprising that you ask, 'What's happening? Why doesn't his written work demonstrate that he's learned what I taught?'.

As I see it, most of our student's learning difficulties are language related, rather than motivational or intellectual. In the following section of this paper, I want to discuss language and its importance as a determining factor in learning.

Language symbolises and represents for us the objects, people and everything in our environment.

In order to interpret new words and new information and make it our own knowledge, that is, really learn it, we use what we already know, together with cues from the context to make hypotheses about it. Using language means generalising our inner representations of our experiences. This has the effect of reducing the multiciplicity of experience to a more manageable form - a concept - that can be communicated to others. Language comes after conceptualisation as a means of completing and representing our ideas and thoughts. The process of thought itself is dependent on language, and growth in the former depends on growth in the latter. All forms of language play a role in the generation of knowledge and the production of new forms of behaviour.

When we talk to ourselves (you probably don't think you do, but listen to your thoughts now, or any time. It's like an inner monologue going on in your head) or to others, we can inspect part of our thinking so we can change and control our thinking if we wish. Talking and writing, which reflect thought, provide us with ways of guiding our thinking and feeling. Often we are not so effective when we do this silently, but find it easier to talk with someone or try out our ideas and test our understanding on others. The act of verbalising often clarifies something only half understood through reading or listening. Think about something you feel you know well. How did you come to really understand or know that? Just by reading about it? Or by actually telling or explaining it to someone in your own terms?

The basic motivations for using language are to communicate our needs to others, to form social relationships with others, to understand how and why things happen, and to play. These basic motivations for using language should continue to be fulfilled through using language at school. We learn our mother tongue through experience and activity as a child, not merely listening to or imitating others' language. It is important to realise that students for whom English is a second language do not learn the language simply by listening to or imitating any kind of oral or written language, which is what they are doing in most classrooms. They must have opportunities to learn English in the same way as they learned their mother tongue, because they need English to fulfil all those basic needs I mentioned above. Moreover, because we can't all experience everything, access to so much knowledge has to be through language and the very process of understanding and learning involves verbalising.

What is real learning? Piaget's process of assimilation and accommodation (by which new knowledge and old are brought together so that each re-interprets the other) provides an integral part of the theoretical basis for a Language Across the Curriculum policy. The learner should not be a passive receiver of information but must actively reconstitute the new information in terms of what already exists in his/her mental encyclopedia, that is in terms of what he/she already knows. We have to get our students to bring to bear on the new knowledge their own past experiences and knowledge, to make it personal, to learn it. This can be done through speaking, writing or the inner monologue of thought.

Many tasks that we ask students to perform require transmission rather than interpretation of material. Transmission means that the language is used mainly as a kind of speaking tube down which the teacher sends messages or information which the students either receive or don't. Writing tasks are a test that the student recalled instruction given by the teacher. The writing is not related to the student's own thoughts and understanding, the knowledge moves up and down the tube unchanged and 'learning' simply requires the student to accumulate and memorise information. 'Knowing' something for many teachers merely means being able to reproduce given material.

With emphasis on neatness in written work this is a safe, secure teaching situation but a severely limiting learning one, because students are not encouraged to organise their own thoughts by putting them into their words. The teacher generally formalises the thoughts; it is not the student's place to raise problems or formulate hypotheses or plan actions. Many teachers feel that by encouraging talking, they lose control over learning.

(Cont.)

We also make the mistake of using writing as the main means of testing our students' learning. Consequently and understandably, students try to repeat the language given to them by their teachers or used in the written material or textbook, rather than using their own. By not taking chances, by not trying things out for themselves, by not being allowed, or encouraged, to make the necessary connections between their own experiences and knowledge and the new information, students are being severely limited in their opportunities for intellectual growth.

If you look at the reading material of different subjects, you will find that it varies greatly - each subject from the others and all from what students commonly read. It is not only vocabulary that is different, but the paragraph patterns and styles of writing also. In the classroom there is often a dominance of impersonal language, so that the normal linguistic style of the student and his/her home are not acknowledged and an impersonal and unfamiliar style introduced.

What I am advocating then, is a school policy of using language for learning, for putting new ideas into words, for testing one's thinking on others, for fitting together new ideas with old knowledge. I believe that the basis of the school curriculum should be primarily what is worth knowing and secondarily the most efficient process by which it can be known. Language is a key aspect of this process.

Language should be seen as the equal development in every subject of each of the four modes - speaking, listening, reading and writing - and the acceptance of the fact that each is as important as the other in all learning. As teachers we must be concerned about our students' language. For our ESL students, we should provide many more opportunities to use all modes of language.

What I have tried to emphasise in this paper are the difficulties faced by students for whom English is not the mother tongue and whose language therefore is extremely different from that used by school - the teachers, the textbooks - and therefore is inadequate for most classroom purposes. In class, real learning is generally not happening for many of these students. If they learn something, it usually happens after a complicated process of translation into their own language and/or discussion with their friends. Even though they may learn something in this way, the means of demonstrating their successful learning, answering questions or writing about it, is beyond them, requiring the reverse process, translation back into an unfamiliar kind of English, specific to the particular subject.

I don't pretend that there are easy answers to these problems, but as a starting point, I suggest that the curriculum as a whole should not only reflect many elements of the ESL students' out-of-school life, emphasising his/her past experiences, but that as teachers, we should help him/her to be active, to use language to make the necessary connections between new material and old.

I would like you to think about what happens in your own classroom in terms of the time you spend talking to the class, to smaller groups or to individuals and the time each student spends talking. Look also at the use of technical language, jargon, words with a special meaning in your subject. Look at the types of questions you ask and the kinds of writing you require of your students.

I feel that it is our individual and group responsibility to look closely at our own classrooms and to ask ourselves what role language in all its different forms plays there. Does it help to create active learning, or does the way we use language actually prevent learning?

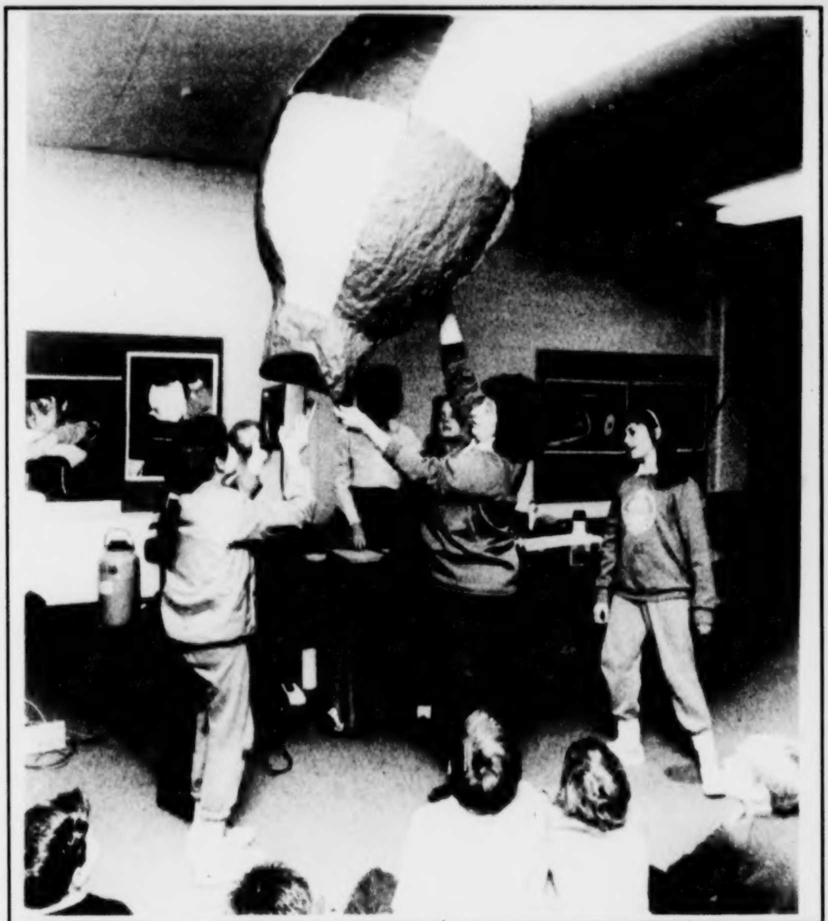
Situation	**Problem**	**Strategies**
1. ESL student doesn't know the meaning of technical words, jargon and words with meanings peculiar to your subjects.	How to teach this specialised language. How to make students realise and learn the different meanings of words and phrases and jargon in different subjects.	List words and phrases used or which occur mainly in spoken or written language to describe the essential aspects and concepts of your subject, for example, *movement* in Physical Education, *shape* in Art/Craft. Devise language practice (exercises, word games, questions and answers, controlled or free writing) which could help students master these essential items of language. List the common English words and phrases with a specialist meaning in your subject and pin them up around the room with translations in students' languages. Use non-verbal aids - diagrams, charts, pictures, demonstrations to assist explanations. Think about what language you would expect students to encounter in other subject areas, and point out different meanings when you use a particular word.

(Cont.)

2. The level and style of the teachers' language and that of the textbook are above and beyond that of the ESL student.	How to adjust the level and style of language (teacher's and written) to make it more easily understood.	Listen to how your students talk. Try to use simple sentences, tenses, vocabulary. Try to use structures yourself or give material in which the structures resemble more closely those used by the student in his/her normal speech. If the student shares the structures and meaning of the text, he can move with the printed word. Comparison is much easier when the student can identify the visual structures with the auditory. Surround students with a variety of reading materials - fact and fiction, primary and secondary, for example: newspapers, magazines, novels, reference books, encyclopedia, atlases, rather than only depersonalised abstract material.
3. The ESL student rarely says anything in English in class. The teacher does 90% of the talking.	How to involve the ESL student in oral activities to get him/her to do more talking and/or to use language as a means of learning.	Provide opportunities for exploratory talk, that is, students explore or grope their way through new materials/ ideas in small groups to encourage interpretation of new material in light of old. Provide opportunities for students to see, feel and experience what you are trying to teach. Look for other areas of their curriculum where these concepts are used, or which might provide concrete experiences that would illustrate these concepts.
4. The ESL student is usually just a passive recipient of the material.	How to encourage the ESL student to become active in learning.	Help students to make links between the new information and their own past experiences by finding points of contact between the unfamiliar and the known.
5. The ESL student writes in a way which often involves merely copying the language of the textbook. Written tasks don't require him/her to use his/her knowledge of English.	How to get the ESL student to demonstrate real learning in his/her writing and to use his/her own language rather than that of the textbook or written material.	Set writing tasks closer to talk. Let writers think through their writing. Set personal writing tasks where students' own relevant experiences can be used. Let them write for specific audiences which are not alien or critical. Encourage them to explore a topic through meaningful writing exercises.

(Cont.)

Strategies listed here are elementary and many more, especially strategies which would develop and foster students bilingual skills, could be added.



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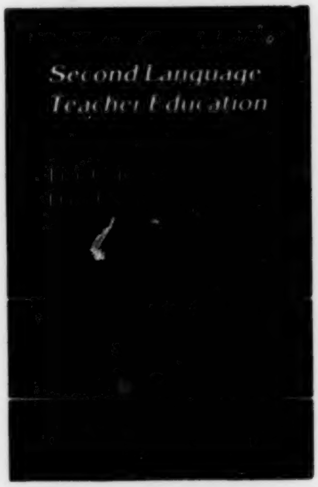
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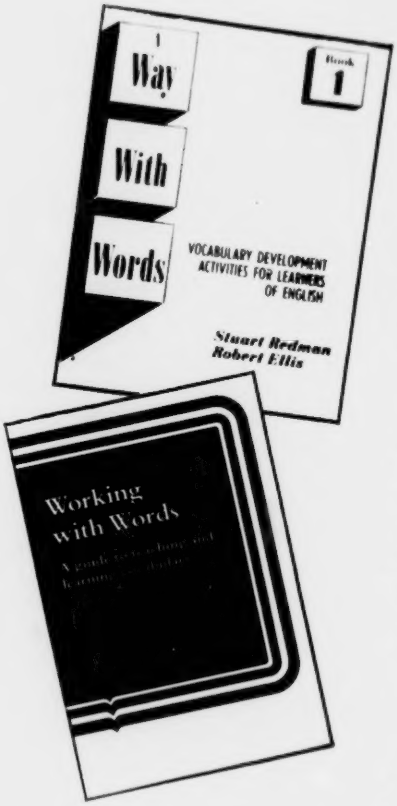
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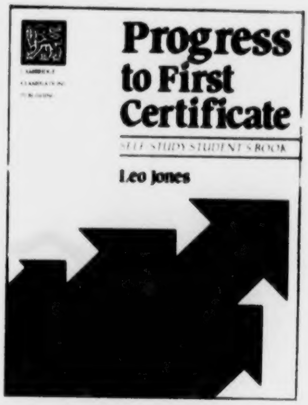
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Jenny Davies & Elizabeth Adeney show how a science teacher develops science concepts and language in units of work in years 7 and 9 and some of the different ways in which an ESL teacher supports the process.

Introduction

A few years ago five members of staff from our school were involved in a 'Language across the Curriculum' in-service. Teachers of practical subjects were encouraged to attend. One of the ideas put forward was that, during practical classes, the teacher can provide special opportunities for the student to think about and write in a personal way so as to assist the learner in making sense of new information. A 'Language across the Curriculum' approach is based on the assumption that we learn by using language, that opportunities for experiencing a wide variety of language use are present in all subjects, and that subjects in which students are regularly involved in practical work provide special opportunities for the development of the language, and hence literacy, of all students.

Students should be encouraged to use personal language to express their ideas. Personal language means the language that is most commonly used in the course of everyday living. The process of learning means making knowledge personal, and it is largely through language that we make new information our own. Subject language, for example, the language of science, is often hard and impersonal, and if we expect students to express themselves in a formal way too soon, we may inhibit their learning. We need to bridge the gap between formal and informal language, and the personal-creative uses of language should not be seen as the exclusive domain of the English teacher.

Thus, in Science classes, various strategies can be used to encourage the use of language in the science room.

These include:

1. **Writing experiments as stories, rather than as formal science reports.**
   The students are asked to write down everything they did during the experiment - what happened and what they discovered. They are allowed to include anything which is relevant to them, including their feelings and responses. Students always work in small groups while doing practical activities, giving them many opportunities for talking about what they're doing.
2. **Creative writing**
   For example students are asked to write on the following topic: 'Pretend you are a block of ice sitting in the sun. Describe what happens to you during the day.' This approach allows students to use their imagination as well as demonstrating their understanding of the three states of matter. Writing for a specific audience, for example, school newspaper, class magazine, or parents, gives students a focus for their work.
3. **Giving talks to the class**
   Occasionally it is possible to allow small groups of students to work on different experiments or projects. They get the opportunity to share their experiences and information by talking to the rest of the class.
4. **Keeping diaries**
   This method of recording information works very well in certain situations, for example, planting seeds and recording any changes over a period of time, or keeping mice for an extended period.
5. **Demonstrating experiments**
   Each group of students is responsible for an experiment which they demonstrate and explain to the others. For example physical and chemical changes or making an electrical gadget.

An important element in many classes is to try to extend the students' problem - solving abilities. They are encouraged to design simple experiments to solve a problem, for example:

How can we separate salt and water without losing water?

The students are also asked to predict and hypothesize, for example:

What do you think will happen to the salt when we boil salty water?

The students are allowed to try out their ideas wherever possible.

Sample Unit

YEAR 7 SCIENCE - SEPARATION

A representative unit of work by Year 7 students was *Separation* which was done over a period of four to five weeks. It begins with work on separating sand and beads and culminates in the students devising their own experiment to separate at least three substances using different methods.

Class Profile

The class in which the unit was done consisted of approximately twenty-five students, most of whom were superficially orally proficient learners of Greek background, but with a proportion of beginning learners from Asian and other European backgrounds. There was a relatively high rate of student turnover, especially among the latter group.

Rationale

The ESL students who are the focus of this study formed a class of eight to ten Year 7 beginners. They were students who had just arrived in Australia, who had come straight from Language Centres or who had not achieved a high level of competence in English. These students spent two to three periods per week on Science backup work with a teacher who had been present during one of their two Science classes and had visited the other.

The reason this system was adopted was that, though students from this Year 7 group had not previously attended Science classes, it was felt that they would benefit from inclusion in more mainstream classes if they received sufficient support, and if the type of work done was appropriate to their level. It was hoped that they would benefit socially in being seen by other students as full members of the class, and academically because they would be covering the whole Science curriculum and mastering both its concepts and vocabulary.

(Cont.)

It was also hoped that inclusion in a mainstream class would motivate them to do their best work and thus develop confidence in themselves.

The Science class had been organised for some years so as to put maximum emphasis on language work and to allow students to express concepts and procedures in their own words initially, gradually building up a scientific vocabulary as it became necessary and relevant to them. The emphasis on language work included oral work (talking about and explaining what had happened in an experiment, what had been expected, what had gone wrong, etc.) and written work (writing up the experiment and any class discussion associated with it). It was felt that this method of tackling the subject might, while demanding, be of particular relevance and benefit to the ESL students, and indeed this proved to be the case.

Procedure

As an introduction to the topic of *Separating mixtures*, the teacher takes some beads in a beaker, pours in sand, stirs the mixture, and asks the students for some ideas on how they could be separated.

A couple of suggestions are forthcoming:-

Add some water - the sand will stay at the bottom and the beads will float.

Use a sieve - the sand will go through but the beads won't.

Both suggestions can be easily tried out, and the students can judge which is the better method.

The teacher now makes a second mixture of sand and water.

How can these be separated?

Some students will still suggest the sieve method, even though they have just seen the sand go through it. The teacher tries it out and the method fails.

What now?

Use some cloth and tip the mixture through it, might be a suggestion.

The teacher asks the students why they think this may work.

Because the cloth has smaller holes than the sieve.

When the method is tried out, the water may still be a bit cloudy, but it is much better than using the sieve.

So the question is asked,

What could we use that may have even smaller holes in it?

Some students know about coffee filters, and remember that the coffee grounds are kept behind in the paper. It may be appropriate at this stage to show the students filter paper.

So? What do we do with the paper?

Just tip it through the paper into a beaker.

It works, but is very messy and some is spilled.

Any other suggestions as to how we could do this without spilling any? Do you remember a piece of equipment we saw early in the term?

Someone usually remembers the filter funnel to hold the paper, and at this stage, the students can be asked to try and fit the paper into the funnel.

Look - it pops up from the funnel. How can we get it to stay put?

They all seem to know the answer to this one!

The students now break into small groups. Their task is to get clear water from muddy water. They are not told what not to do. Hence, some students pour in too much so it goes over the sides of the paper into the flask. Others prod the paper impatiently with a glass rod. Both groups learn from their mistakes and repeat the experiment successfully with very little help from the teacher.

Towards the end of the lesson, the class discusses any problems all together, and new words are put on the board:-

for example:

filter funnel
filter paper
stirring rod
conical flask
mixture
pour
separate

A class member volunteers to come to the front and demonstrates what has been learned that lesson. The student acts as teacher and uses the equipment while talking about it. The final instruction will be -

Now write this experiment into your books as a story. Make sure you tell me everything you did, what happened and what you learned. Also tell me what you thought of today's experiment.

The following lessons continue this theme. The students separate chalk and water by filtering, and attempt to do the same with salt and water. As this obviously will not work, the students are asked to think of another way of recovering the salt. The suggestion of heating up the salt solution is usually put forward, and the students carry out the experiment.

More new words can be written up on the board for use in the next story for example:

dissolve
solution
boil
evaporate
evaporating basin
steam

At this stage, the students can now try to solve the problem of separating a mixture of chalk, salt and water without help from the teacher. Any mistakes they make will become obvious to them, so they can repeat the experiment correctly and gain some satisfaction from this.

A consideration of the question *How can we separate salt and water without losing water?* leads the students into thinking of ways in which steam can be changed back into water. They can be asked to design a piece of equipment to do this efficiently by working in small groups and brainstorming, once the idea of cooling the steam has been raised. In the following lesson, the use of the Liebig condenser is demonstrated to the students.

Before the demonstration begins the students are asked to explain how the equipment works and what will happen. The next lesson is a class experiment using a mini condenser (consisting of test-tube, rubber stopper and delivery tube) to separate salt and water, and the students may find that this equipment is very similar to their own design.

The final experiment in this topic is the most exciting and demanding for the students. They are asked to work in a small group of two to three students, and they are allowed to make up their own mixture form a selection of common materials listed on the board. They are limited to four substances, but otherwise they are free to choose any of those suggested. They spend one lesson planning how to separate their mixture and what equipment they will need.

(Cont.)

By the end of the lesson, each group will have submitted this completed question sheet:-

1. *Members of our group*
2. *Things we need for our mixture*
3. *Equipment we need to separate our mixture*
4. *How we intend to separate our mixture and what we expect to happen*

The students follow their plan during the next lesson, and generally manage to finish. If the mixture was badly chosen and two soluble substances were selected, the group may decide to try again in the time available with an alternative mixture. The experiment is written up as a story for homework, and the groups are told they will be expected to give talks to the class next lesson. The talks are sometimes confusing, and many questions are asked of the group, so much so that sometimes the group asks permission to repeat the talk to the class. The students can be asked to write an opinion of their talk, and to say how they feel about it.

As a final assignment in this section, creative writing and problem-solving are drawn together in this idea for a science story.

> *Imagine you are shipwrecked on a desert island. There's no fresh water available, but there are driftwood, old bottles and cans available on the beach. How will you survive?*

Backup Lessons in ESL Classes

Procedure in backup ESL classes is closely linked to procedure in Science classes, partly because students virtually always have some sort of written homework with which they need help. Some need a great deal of help in structuring and expressing their story, while others simply need assurance that they understand the instructions and are on the right track.

Typically, students are asked what they have done in their Science class; thus the first part of the lesson is oral and designed both to show the teacher how much the students have understood and to prompt the students' memories of words and concepts. Difficult vocabulary is put on the board. Early in the year the sequence of events in the Science lesson, or a series of leading questions are also put on the board. As students gain confidence, however, this becomes unnecessary.

The second part of the lesson is devoted to students writing the first draft of their 'story', their account of what has happened in Science. They are encouraged not to worry too much about spelling or grammar at this stage, but to put all their efforts into narrative. They are free to seek advice from other students. With most students the result is a very substantial, individual, but rough, piece of writing. A few students need much prompting from the teacher to get anything on paper at all but are very proud when they manage to do so.

The procedure followed after the first draft has been written depends on the time available. Sometimes students ask other students or friends and relations to help correct their work but generally the teacher goes over the work with the students, pointing out where the prose is faulty and eliciting corrections.

Occasionally the teacher corrects the draft at home, but only when there is no time to speak to students individually. After the draft has been corrected, the students write the story into their Science books and illustrate it. Books are collected each Friday by the Science teacher for comment. One or two stories are written per week.

Of course with different tasks, different procedures are followed. Students might, for instance, practise giving talks on their Science work, with the object of either putting the talk on tape or presenting it to the whole Science class. They might do library work to gather information for a quiz or an exercise in scientifically based creative writing. If dissatisfied with their written work they might opt to do further drafts (five in one case) or they might move ahead of their Science class and preview the work about to be done.

This previewing of Science work seems a promising line to follow, since it gives the students added confidence in their Science class. Also it seems logical for them to progress to the more complex vocabulary of mainstream classes, having already mastered basic concepts and vocabulary in ESL classes. The more material already known, the more can be absorbed.

The following is the written work of two students on various aspects of separation.

Vanessa is a twelve year old Spanish girl who has been in Australia for six months. She had six years of schooling before coming to Australia.

This is Vanessa's written account of her separation experiment:-

On Wednesday we did some different experiments. My group was Anastasia and I. For doing this experiment we needed a beaker, a magnet, a Bunsen burner, a bench mat, filter paper, a filter funnel, a conical flask, a test tube holder, a test tube, a rubber stopper and glass tubing.

First we got a beaker with salt, water, iron filing and chalk powder and we stirred them together with a stirring rod.

1. *First we wanted to separate the iron filings, so we needed the magnet. When we had the magnet we put it in to the water, and we got the iron filings and we put them on one piece of filter paper.*

2. *Then we wanted to separate the chalk, so we got a filter funnel and filter paper with the conical flask. Then we folded the filter paper in four parts and we put it in to the filter funnel and we put the salty water with chalk in the filter paper. The salty water went into the conical flask and the chalk stayed in the filter paper, so we had separated chalk from the salty water.*

3. *Then we wanted to separate the salt from the water so we needed the test tube, test tube holder, rubber stopper and glass tubing, Bunsen burner, bench mat. Then we put the salt and water in the test tube and we lit the Bunsen burner. Then we put the end of the test tube in the Bunsen burner flame and we waited five minutes. Then the steam came through the glass tubing, changed to water and dripped in to the beaker and the salt stayed in the test tube, so we can separate everything with something special.*

(Cont.)

Theary is Cambodian. She has been in Australia for five years and has attended four years of primary school here. She is thirteen years old. She only had a couple of months schooling in Cambodia.

Theary wrote about separating salt, chalk and water.

We took a beaker. We got some chalk and salt and water. We stirred them together in the beaker. We took some filter paper and we put it on filter funnel. Then we put the water and salt and chalk in the funnel then the salty water with salt dripped in to the conical flask. Then we put the water with salt in the evaporating dish (the chalk stayed in the litter paper). Then we got a Bunsen burner and got a bench mat and tripod and wire gauze and we put the evaporating dish on the wire gait we lit the Bunsen burner. We put the evaporating dish on the wire gauze. We waited five minutes. Then the water went to the air and salt stayed in to the evaporating dish. The chalk was in the filter paper. I think that good.

Students also had to give talks to the class.

The ESL group was given a choice. They could either give their talks in the ESL class and have them recorded, or they could give their talks along with the rest of the class. Interestingly enough, they all opted to be recorded in their ESL class, but then, having gained in confidence, they all repeated their talks in front of all the other students in the next science lesson. No notes were used. Here is a transcript of Vanessa's talk.

'Now I want to talk about my experiment, how to separate iron filing, water, salt and chalk. To do this experiment I need a Bunsen burner, bench mat, conical flask, (sic) beaker and ... test tube, test tube holder, glass tubing, rubber stopper ....

First I want to separate the iron fillings so I need a magnet .. um... so I need a magnet. Then I put the magnet into the water and I .... and I get the iron fillings on the magnet and I put them in one part of the filter paper. Then I want to separate the chalk so I need the filter funnel, filter paper and conical flask. I fold the filter paper in four parts and I put into the filter funnel. Then I get the beaker with the salty water and chalk, and I put into the filter paper. Then the chalk is stayed on the filter paper and the water goes into the conical flask. Then I want to separate the salty water, so I need a test-tube, test-tube holder, glass tubing, rubber stopper, Bunsen burner and bench mat. So I lit the Bunsen burner, and I put the end of the test-tube on the flame of the Bunsen burner. And then I waited five minutes or something like that, and the water is evaporated and is steam, and the steam come through the glass tubing and then goes onto the beaker.'

Sample Unit

YEAR 9 SCIENCE - THE MICROSCOPE

At the Year 9 level a representative unit of work is *The Microscope*. Students began the unit by handling and exploring the microscope on their own, without instruction, and ended it by writing instructions on the use of the microscope for Year 7 students.

Class Profile

This unit was done at the very beginning of the year, with a mainstream group of approximately twenty-five students. Most of these students were Greek speaking learners who were only superficially proficient in spoken English, but there was a small group of ESL beginners in the class. These were students from Thailand, Vietnam, and in one case, Spain. They had been in Australia only a short time, had recently come from Language Centres, or had for some reason not made great progress in learning English. The language level of these students was, in general, extremely basic, which was a serious problem at Year 9 level, when both concepts and vocabulary can be quite sophisticated.

Rationale

The group of students focused on in this program attended three Science classes a week, and received two to three periods of ESL teaching based on Science classes. The ESL teacher was present in two of the three Science lessons.

The Year 9 beginner students had always been included in Science classes and had had periods allotted for backup Science work. The problem was that the ESL Science backup work had often been general and not always specific to what students had been doing in Science classes. The ESL teacher would help with language and explain concepts, but was not working closely with the Science teacher to develop or modify material and to train students in the use of scientific language.

It was believed that by using the Language across the Curriculum approach and tying ESL work in more closely with Science work, the students would receive more intensive instruction, and make better progress in both Science and English than they might otherwise have done.

Procedure

The approach used with this topic is *Find out how to use the microscope. By the end of the lesson, you should be able to do three things*

a) make the specimen look bright

b) make the specimen look clear around the edges

c) make the specimen look bigger or smaller.

The words *illuminate, focus* and *magnify* can be used eventually, once the students have learned how to do these tasks.

Towards the end of the lesson, most students will have learned a great deal about what works and what doesn't, so volunteers can be asked to come to the front to demonstrate the use of the microscope. Many students will use words like *focus* and *magnify* quite naturally, whereas others need time to fully grasp their meanings and are free to express themselves in other ways. A variation on the demonstration techniques where the student may fall into the trap of saying 'You put this here and do that', is to let the teacher take the student's role. The student now has to give specific instructions to a particularly 'dense' individual in order to make it absolutely clear what should be done. No pointing is allowed. In order to get the slide in the correct position, the student will be forced to say *You place the slide on the black ledge (stage) so that the red blob/animal (specimen) is directly over the hole in the middle. This allows light to shine through it.*

(Cont.)

Once the students have grasped how to use the mircroscope, the nature of the various parts can be revised, as many students will know these from using the microscope in Year 7. The next task is to ask the class to design a booklet of instruction for use with the Year 7 class. The students are told the Year 7 students will be relying on clear instructions in order for them to learn the microscope's use. Students work in pairs on the booklet, and giving them this specific audience forces them to clarify their own thoughts and expression. The first draft is worked through and re-drafted where it fails to convey clear instruction. After a couple of lessons, the booklets, usually with some background information and clearly labelled diagrams, are ready for use with the Year 7's.

The following is a set of microscope instructions given by Sonia in Year 9 to the Year 7 students.

Sonia is a fifteen year old Spanish girl. She has been in Australia for six months and had done eight years of schooling before she came to Australia. She had not, however, studied English.

1. *First put the lamp in front of the microscope.*
2. *Switch it on. The light must shining on the mirror.*
3. *Look by the eyepiece lens to see if the light is coming through. If it's not, adjust the mirror, so the light shines through the hole.*
4. *Put the slide on the stage (the cover slip must be just over the hole).*
5. *Put the clips on the ends of the slide to keep it in place.*
6. *Look through the eyepiece lens. Then turn the focus wheel to see the specimen more clearly.*
7. *Starting from the smallest objective lens turn the revolving nose piece to see the specimen bigger or smaller how you see better.*
8. *Look through the eyepiece lens. If the specimen is not clear adjust the focus wheels to see the specimen more clearly.*

Backup Lessons in ESL Classes

Procedure in ESL classes is, as usual, closely tied with work in Science classes. A microscope is brought to the backup lessons and students practise naming its component parts and demonstrating and explaining its use. Work with slides is done primarily in the Science class, but students use ESL lessons to write drafts of their observations. Finally these students are told that the Year 7 students will also be studying the microscope and will require instructions on its use. They write the booklet of instructions mentioned above with the help and support of their ESL class. Assessment of the booklet is by the Year 7 students who write notes indicating its usefulness to them. Thus not only the accuracy of the instruction is assessed, but also their clarity of expression.

This year, some of the Year 9 students including one ESL boy, asked for permission to come into the Year 7 class when the booklets were to be read. Five students came in and took over the lesson. The Year 7 ESL students needed help in reading the booklets, and the older students helped them, but did not solve any other problems for them. By the end of the lesson, four separate groups of Year 7's had come to the front and shown the class what they had learned. The final task was for the Year 7 students to write letters back to the Year 9 students, commenting on the usefulness of the booklets.

This lesson was an interesting experiment and worked extremely well. The older students made it clear they could cope and needed very little help from the teacher. The younger students also enjoyed being helped by the older ones.

Evaluation

When students are given written tasks in Science classes they are given time to get started on these in their ESL class and are given extra encouragment and stimulus by the teacher. The role of encouragement and reassurance can hardly be overstated, especially for Year 9 beginner students who are under much more academic pressure than Year 7 beginner students. Though they have the maturity and motivation to cope with it, they do need encouragement and extra support until they develop confidence in their own abilities to speak, write, collect and assimilate information.

When evaluating a piece of writing, these gudielines are followed

a) an experimental report should contain an account of what was done, what happened and what the student discovered.

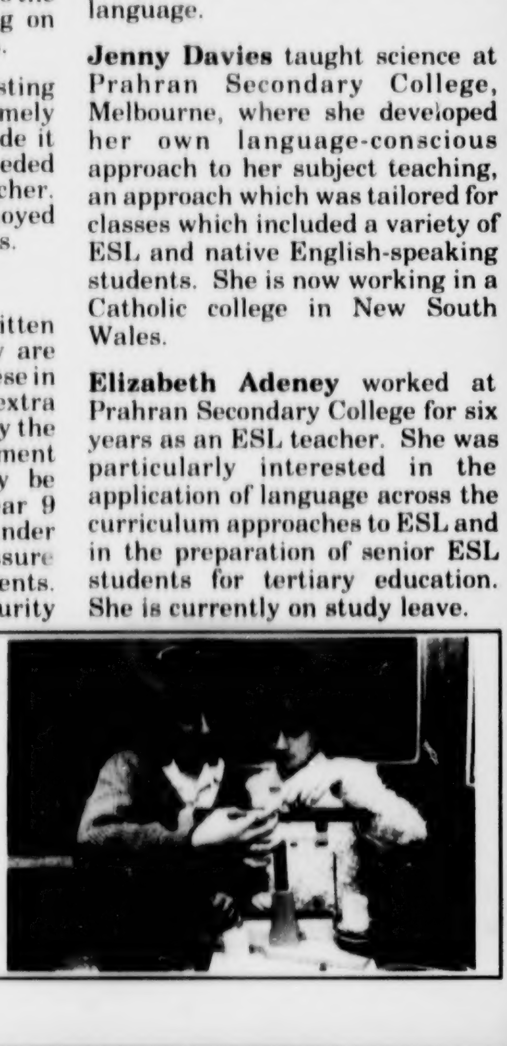
b) the degree of effort put into the presentation of the piece of writing is considered.

c) a scientific story must contain accurate scientific information, as well as being imaginative and easy to read.

Written tests are generally given at the end of each topic. The aim is to write the tests in such a way that they are equally accessible to all students, thus the instructions are written clearly and simply in large print. They are conveyed using a minimum of language. Diagrams are used to support or clarify instructions wherever possible. This is the case even when the test itself requires heavy use of language, since students may be much more confident of their own language skills than of their comprehension of the teacher's language.

Jenny Davies taught science at Prahran Secondary College, Melbourne, where she developed her own language-conscious approach to her subject teaching, an approach which was tailored for classes which included a variety of ESL and native English-speaking students. She is now working in a Catholic college in New South Wales.

Elizabeth Adeney worked at Prahran Secondary College for six years as an ESL teacher. She was particularly interested in the application of language across the curriculum approaches to ESL and in the preparation of senior ESL students for tertiary education. She is currently on study leave.



Planning a Lesson within a Program

Nola Philip shows the detailed planning of a series of lessons based on a newspaper feature article. She demonstrates how a skilled TESOL-trained teacher analyses some of students' language needs for curriculum purposes, analyses the concepts and language of the topic and tasks, then plans the strategies to make material comprehensible to the learners and to have them develop certain language skills. The material used by students is included too.

A: Class

Ten male students enrolled in a general Year 11 course at a secondary technical school.

Age Range: 16 - 21

Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating Range:

Reading and writing	0^+ - 3
Listening	1 - 3
Speaking	1^+ - 4

Background:

Five Spanish-speaking students, who have lived in Australia between a year and a half and two years, have educational backgrounds comparable to students of similar age in Australia and are fluent and literate in Spanish.

One Spanish speaker has had no schooling prior to his enrolment in school in Australia about two years ago. He has limited fluency in English. He operates at a conversational level in Spanish at home, but is not literate in Spanish.

Two students from Vietnam, one of whom speaks Chinese, have had some disruption of schooling there. They have attended school in Australia for approximately three years.

One Chinese-Vietnamese student has attended schools in Australia for five or six years. For at least two years he did not speak to teachers at all and communicated through other students who responded for him. He was referred to Student Services for speech therapy assistance but has never attended appointments. His educational history in Vietnam is unknown.

A Chinese student from Vietnam has been in Australia for seven years but his schooling has been disrupted during this time. He has spent the last two and a half years living with his grandmother in Sydney where he did not attend school.

Course

These sessions are part of a 3 x 50 minutes per week Social Studies course which is run as an alternative to mainstream Social Studies. The course considers topics taught in mainstream classes though it does not mirror them.

These students also attend an ESL course of 4x50 minute classes per week run as an alternative to mainstream English. They have therefore 7x50 minutes per week of a direct ESL program.

B. Identifying Language Errors

The following errors were observed in class:

1. Syntactic errors - tense

(i) *She don't want the children to stay with their mother.*
for: She didn't want the children to stay with their mother.
(Selection : person and past tense not marked in auxilliary verb)

(ii) *I live in my cousin's house and then I move out.*
for: I lived in my cousin's house and then I moved out.
(Selection : verb not marked for simple past tense (regular))

(iii) *They justed use big leaves to cover their bodies.*
for: They just used big leaves to cover their bodies.
(Selection : past tense is marked with -ed but the adverb is mistaken for the verb)

(iv) *They were hunted animals.*
for: They hunted animals.
(Addition : double marking of past tense through overgeneralising use of auxiliary)

(v) *A refugee is the person who escape from . . .*
for: A refugee is a person who escapes/has escaped from . . .
(Selection : 1. verb not marked for simple present or present perfect tense
2. verb not marked to agree with third person singular subject)

2. Syntactic errors - articles

(i) *- Migrant is the person who ....*
for: A migrant is a person who ....
(Omission : of indefinite article
Selection : of definite article for indefinite article used in definitions)

(ii) *- Refugee is the person who ....*
for: A refugee is a person who ....
(as above)

(iii) *He left because an American bombed his country.*
for: He left because the Americans bombed his country.
(Selection : indefinite for definite article indicating a specific group
Omission : plural marker)

3. Syntactic errors - relative pronouns

(i) *A Chinese-Australian is someone's mother or father came from China.*
for: A Chinese-Australian is someone whose mother or father came from China.
(Selection : whose/who as a. Possible overgeneralisation of contractions, interference from speech in writing)

(ii) *A migrant is a person whose live in ....*
for: A migrant is a person who lives ...
(Selection : *whose* for *who* or this student may have marked *who* instead of *live* for the third person singular verb agreement)

4. Lexico-semantic/register errors

(i) *My answer bullshit, miss.*
for: My answer is wrong, miss.
(Register Vocabulary selection)

(ii) *The job is hard because he has to work almost per day.*
for: The job is hard because he has to work almost all/every day.
(Vocabulary selection Overgeneralisation from example "teaching hours per week")

(iii) *I want to stop school.*
for: I want to leave school.
(Vocabulary selection Omission of full infinitive with "to" after "want")

(iv) *My age is young.*
for: I am young.
(Vocabulary selection)

5. Graphophonic errors

(i) *lenguage*
for: language
(Selection : spelling : interference from speech influenced by Spanish)

(ii) *Inglish*
for: English
(Selection : interference from speech)

(iii) *Six students _peak Portuguese.*
for: Six students speak Portuguese.
(Omission : interference from speech?)

(iv) *Footscary*
for: Footscray (Spelling reversal)

C. Language Analysis

Written Text: Aspects of language to be learnt or taught from text : Geoff Maslen: 'For Melbourne, read Buckleyville' (The Age, 16 November 1984)

Channel: visual

Medium: written

Message form: newspaper feature article

(Cont.)

Social level: formal narration
Topic: The life of William Buckley and his role in the settlement of Melbourne
Semantic/structural level: discourse and sentence level

1. **Lexical sets: for example**

(a) Verbs to do with Australian history
(for production)
transported
shipped
convicted
recaptured
escaped

(b) Jobs
(for recognition)
interpreter
gatekeeper
storekeeper
brickmason
bricklayer
porter

(c) adjectives
(for production)
gigantic
immense
large
giant
wild
sad
disillusioned

(d) Aborigines /Australia
(for recognition)
Aborigine
tribe
bush
blacks
spears
waddy
skin rug

(e) verbs about life history
(for production)
born
lived
apprenticed
married
retired
died

(f) geographical terms
(for recognition)
bay
river
coastline

(g) place names
(for production)
Yarra
Maribyrnong
Derwent
Hobart
Tasmania, etc

(h) time sequencing
(for production)
Then
Years later
For months

(i) verbs (for walking)
(for recognition)
traverse advance wander retrace
move pace

2. Paragraphing: variation in length, how they are marked in writing in English, how they are linked and ordered.

3. Topic sentences: position in article, function of a topic sentence, e.g. *A giant English convict, Buckley was transported to Australia in 1803 but escaped into the bush to become Victoria's first and most famous wild white man.*

4. Sentence variation:
(a) Simple setences, e.g. *Buckley was born in 1780 at Macclesfield in Cheshire.*
(b) Complex sentences e.g. *He eventually ended up in a camp near today's Sorrento from where, on 27 December, he escaped with five other convicts into the bush.*
(c) Embedded sentences e.g. *Then, in 1803, when he was a 23 year old, Buckley was shipped in a cargo of convicts to Australia.*

5. Print conventions: e.g. quoting from the writing of others, capitalisation

6. Adjective order: e.g. *a giant English convict ...*
Victoria's first and most famous wild white man ....
He left Victoria, sad and disillusioned.

7. Prepositions: *in 1803*
at Macclesfield
in Cheshire etc

8. Time expressions: *at the age of*
for
When he was a 22 year old
Two years later

9. Linking devices: connectors, e.g. *Indeed,*
proforms

10. Scanning: reading for gist and predicting from headline

11. Historical names/places: e.g. those after whom familiar places are named, such as
John Batman
David Collins
William Buckley
Captain Lonsdale

12. Synonyms: *comrades - companions*
deserters - runaways

13. Geography of Port Phillip Bay coastline from the Heads to Melbourne

14. Attitudes to Aborigines in 18th and 19th centuries.

Text: Macrofunction: narration
Sub-function:
(i) narrating past events in sequence
(ii) reporting someone else's opinions
Language structures/ exponents:
(1) simple past (regular) e.g. *enlisted served, etc*
(irregular)
left was went
(2) simple past passive e.g. *was born was shot*
was convicted, etc
(3) past perfect e.g.
had avoided had pulled, etc
(4) prepositions (time)
in 1803 on December 27th
(place)
in Macclesfield
around the coast
near Point Lonsdale
(5) time markers and linkers: e.g.
Later, in England...
Then, in 1803
He eventually...
When...
For months...
(6) Phrases (prepositional): e.g. *at the age of...*
(7) Order of adjectives: e.g. *first and most famous,*
wild white
a giant English concvict
(8) Connectives
(9) Cohesive devices: e.g. pronouns
synonyms

For Melbourne, read Buckleyville

Geoff Maslen *The Age* 16/11/84

"HERE is the man who laid Melbourne's first brick. His story is history, but one cannot tell it from romance. His name was Buckley and some day Melbourne's name will be change to Buckleyville or Buckleytown or Buckleyburg - Buckleyville, I think, the present injustice cannot last forever."

So predicted Mark Twain in 1897. The man he was referring to, Melbourne's first bricklayer if Twain is to be believed, was William Buckley. A giant English convict, Buckley was transported to Australia in 1803 but escaped into the bush to become Victoria's first and most famous wild white man.

Indeed, he could lay claim to being the State's first European settler for he lived here more than 35 years, the greater part of that time among Aborigines of the Geelong tribes. For 32 years before John Batman found his spot for a village, Buckley had traversed the area. He was familiar with the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers, and the coastline of the bay decades before the white invasion.

Buckley was born in 1788 at Macclesfield in Cheshire. He was apprenticed as a brickmason but tired of this and at 19 enlisted for a bounty of 10 guineas in the Cheshire Militia. He served in Holland with the Duke of York at the head of the British army fighting the French. Later, in England, he was convicted of receiving stolen goods and was, as Mark Twain noted, "doomed preliminarily to the hell known as the hulks for a while - you note how richly his young life opened . . ."

Then, in 1803 when he was a 23-year-old, Buckley was shipped in a cargo of convicts to Australia. He eventually ended up in a camp near today's Sorrento from where, on 27 December he escaped with five other convicts into the bush. One escapee was shot as they left camp. Buckley and his companions moved rapidly, soon putting considerable distance between themselves and the military.

The settlement Buckley left had been founded by Lieutenant Colonel David Collins, who had orders to settle the Port Phillip district to forestall the possibility of French occupation. Some historians suggest that Collins deliberately chose the singularly unpromising site at Sorrento so that he could justify his move in early 1804 across Bass Strait to Tasmania. There, Collins founded Hobart Town on the banks of the Derwent River.

(Cont.)

Why Buckley decided to take off into the inhospitable bush is not clear, although several desertions had occurred before he escaped.

In February next year, Collins reported five deserters had been recaptured 60 miles from the settlement and each had received 100 lashes. That prospect probably gave Buckley added reasons to keep moving although, according to Mark Twain: "Buckley and his comrades had originally thought of walking to California for they were not educated men and their geography was weak. But when Buckley was left solitary, he made no such attempt because of the distance partly, and partly because he was in doubt as to California's precise whereabouts."

Years later, Buckley declared he was only trying to get to Sydney but agreed the attempt was little short of madness. In any event, after several days struggling through the bush, his companions decided that while the dread of punishment was great, the fear of starvation exceeded it.

They set out to retrace their steps but Buckley declared he was determined to endure every kind of suffering rather than surrender his liberty again. Neither he - nor any other European - was ever to see the runaways again. Buckley himself was not to meet another white man for more than three decades.

For months he wandered around the coast - he occupied a rock shelter near Point Lonsdale for a time which is known now as Buckley's Cave - until he became mentally and physically exhausted. He had avoided, as much as he could, any contact with the Aborigines but was fortunate that when he collapsed a group of women found him.

Mark Twain recorded the meeting "He had a stroke of luck that morning although he was not aware of it. He had pulled a spear out of a grave, for support, and it was in his hand when the Aborigines came across him. They believed he was the occupant of the grave come to life again, so he was among relatives and friends. They were glad to have him back and so he was at once provided with food, and wives, and a nephew, and other necessities of life, and made welcome and at home . . ."

Buckley was treated with great kindness by the blacks and he lived more-or-less harmoniously with them for half a lifetime until, in July, 1835, he became caught up in the first efforts of white colonisation around Melbourne.

Hobart's 'Colonial Times' gave its readers the scoop story, only a few weeks old, of Buckley's return to his own kind.

"Some of Mr Batman's men were, one fine morning, much frightened at the approach of a white man of immense size, covered with an enormous opossum skin rug, and his hair and beard spread out as large as a bushel measure. He advanced with a number of spears in one hand, and a waddy in the other.

"The first impression of Mr Batman's then was that the giant would put one of them under each arm and walk away with them. The man showing signs of speech, their fears subsided, and they spoke to him. At first he could not understand one word and it took a few days before he could make them understand who he was and what he had been.

"By all accounts he is a model for Hercules. He is more active than any of the blacks and can throw a spear an astounding distance . . ."

Although John Batman was not present when Buckley began to reassume his forgotten European past, it was Batman who had led the expedition from Tasmania to form a settlement at Port Phillip. It was Batman who had set about finding some Aborigines to negotiate a treaty with - a treaty intended to dispossess the original inhabitants of their land in return for some blankets, knives and tomahawks along with "looking glass, handkerchiefs, flour and six shirts".

The British Government, at the request of the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, Governor Arthur, agreed to grant Buckley a pardon and in time he was employed by Batman's party as an interpreter at a salary of £50 a year. Later, he is said to have built the first chimney to send wood smoke drifting over Melbourne: the chimney formed part of John Batman's hut.

Although the so-called Batman treaty, by which the native tribes were said to have ceded their lands to Batman's Port Phillip Association, was not validated by the Government, the association was successful in its efforts to be accepted as the colonisers. On 9 September 1836, the settlement was formally recognised by the Sydney authorities and Captain Lonsdale appointed Police Magistrate of Port Phillip.

High hopes had been held for Buckley's usefulness to the colonists, but these were not realised. The giant blamed John Pascoe Fawkner - Batman's rival and fellow claimant to be the real founder of Melbourne - for forcing him to resign his job with the association. He said Fawkner had called him a dangerous character and one having too much influence with the Aborigines.

Fawkner certainly does not seem to have entertained a very high opinion of the wild white man. Describing the discovery of Buckley, Fawkner remarked acidly: "He stood six foot five inches in his stockings, was not very bulky or over-burdened with nous. He fell to the level of the blacks and did not by any means elevate or raise them or instruct them in any manner. The Governor Arthur party showered favors innumerable on him; alas, the lump of matter was too mindless to yield any very useful information . . ."

James Bonwick, one-time Inspector of Schools in Tasmania wrote a life of Buckley and noted: "We ourselves lived for eight years in the same town with Buckley, almost daily seeing his gigantic figure slowly pacing along the middle of the road, with his eyes vacantly fixed upon some object before him, never turning his head to salute a passerby.

"Some folks tried the effect of the steaming vapor of the punch bowl with no better success, for though his eye might glisten a little, his tongue was silent. He had no tale to tell."

Against this assessment has to be put Buckley's extraordinary achievement in living for so long with an alien people. He must as one historian has noted, have possessed something of the qualities of courage, tact and cleverness, besides being lucky, to have lived so long in conditions which had proved speedily fatal to others.

In any case, all Buckley's years of young manhood had been spent among a people who viewed the world, spiritually and physically, so differently to Europeans that they might have belonged on another planet. The switch from one world view to another and back again would have been enough to silence anyone.

He left Victoria, sad and disillusioned, and went to Hobart where he was appointed storekeeper at the Immigrants Home and, later constable porter or gatekeeper at the Female Convicts Factory.

He married a Tasmanian widow, a woman who was as remarkable for her short stature as he was the opposite. When they walked out together, it was said, she could not reach his arm. Buckley got over the difficulty by tying two corners of a handkerchief together and looping it over his arm so his wife could put her arm through the lower end of the loop.

In something approaching domestic bliss, Buckley lived out his life in Hobart. He was 70 when he was retired on a pension of £12 a year. Two years later as the result of a popular petition, the Victorian Government paid him an annuity of £40. But Buckley was to enjoy its benefits for only another four years. In 1856, he fell from a brewer's cart and sustained fatal injuries.

"It takes Australia to beat the record," Mark Twain observed. "The other Crusoes are gone four years and come back ostentatiously gotten up in goat skins for effect. But the Australian kind are gone a generation and come modestly back without anything on at all, so as not to attract attention . . ."

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For Sessions 6, 7, and 8

William Buckley

Year	Age	Event
. . . . .	0	He was born at Macclesfield in Cheshire
. . . . .	19	. . . . in the Cheshire Militia served in Holland fighting the French.
1801	. . .	was convicted of receiving stolen goods.
. . . . .	. . .	was transported to Australia. lived in a camp near Sorrento.
Dec., 1803	. . .	. . . .
Feb., 1804		Five convicts were recaptured 60 miles from the settlement. Punishment - 100 lashes.
1804 - 1805	. . .	Buckley wandered around the coast. lived in a cave near Point Lonsdale.
1805 - 1835	. . .	lived with Aborigines.
1835 - 1836	. . .	was granted a pardon. was employed as an . . . .
1836	. . .	was forced to resign because he had too much influence with the Aborigines.
1836 - 1840	. . .	left Victoria and went to Hobart, worked as a storekeeper and gatekeeper, married a Tasmanian widow.
18 . . .	70	retired on a pension of about $25 per year
. . . . .	76	fell from a brewer's cart and sustained fatal injuries.

(Cont.)

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Sequence of Lessons - Flow Chart

Previous topics (1) Geography of Australia - cities, names, position
(2) European Discovery of Australia
(3) Settlement of Europeans 1788

SESSION 1
Topic: Aborigines - the Original Settlers
Prediction/Brainstorming Session
1. Pairwork: Writing of things they know about Aborigines at time of settlement.
2. Reporting of results - oral
3. Discussion
4. Writing - group summary
5. Group questions for investigation

Input: Background lessons; pictures on display
↓

SESSION 2
Input: Video: *Women of the Sun: Alinta the Flame.*
1. Students view with question sheet from Session 1
2. Confirmation of group summary of knowledge

↓

SESSION 3
Topic: Aboriginal Tribal Life
1. Discussion of video and answers to questions for investigation if obtained
2. Writing - listing of tribal laws, beliefs and customs as shown in video

Language Points: (i) imperative: *do/do not*
(ii) *must / must not*
(iii) past perfect: e.g. *were taught by*
Evaluation: homework sheet: ordering activity: word order in sentences made in class (students given words in wrong order)
↓

SESSION 4
Topic: Whites as portrayed in *Alinta the Flame*
Input/link: Discussion about conflict and lack of understanding of customs
Language point: regular simple past tense
question form
1. Life of white man who lived with Aborigines - life line as seen in video.
2. Input of vocabulary (cue cards): *convicted, transported, escaped, killed,* etc
3. Writing: sentences about his life.

Evaluation: students order sentences in time sequence
↓

SESSION 5
Topic: William Buckley
Link with Session 4
Input 1. Picture of William Buckley without text from article used to generate predictions about his life, name, personality, etc. Discussion of clothing, etc.
2. Prediction work from headline
Writing - rewriting headline in ordinary English prose
3. Written text: work at discourse level - scanning for confirmation of predictions
- eliciting topic sentences
4. Prediction of what past tense verbs they might find in article about life history
5. Underlining these in text copies.

↓

SESSION 6
Topic: Life of William Buckley
Input: text of article
map of Victoria showing Sorrento, etc
Reading for Detailed Information : Students complete timeline of life history of William Buckley.
Evaluation: completion of timeline.
Homework: wordsearch of simple past verbs.
↓

SESSION 7
Input: completed timelines
Talking about past events - making sentences from text:
Language points: *When he was –, he was convicted*
At the age of –, he was convicted
As a 20 year old, he was transported
Written work based on this.
True/false sentences based on this language form for homework.
Bingo: simple regular past tense forms to practise pronunciation/recognition of vocabulary.
↓

SESSION 8
see detailed plan on page 32
↓

SESSION 9
Topic: Aboriginal Customs and Changes since White Settlement
Link with Session 8: Brief life of Kath Walker
Input: Story read by teacher
Kath Walker: *Stradbroke, Island of My Dreams*
Listening for changes since tribal life portrayed in *Alinta the Flame.*
Discussion: What aspects of life had changed, what had not. Comparison with migrant experience to lead into the next topic.

SESSION 8

Learning Outcomes:
At the end of this session students will be able to
(1) complete a time-line of life history to date for themselves using regular and irregular simple past tense including active and passive voice verbs.
(2) ask questions to get information to fill in a time line for someone else.
(3) talk about past experiences in their own lives and others'.

The following structures will be used:
A. Question forms
(1) *Where were you born?*
(2) *When were you born?*
(3) *When did you first go to school?*
(4) *When did you leave your home country?*
(5) *When did you arrive in Australia?*
(6) *When did you come to this school?*
(7) *How old were you when you ....?* (for each of questions 3 - 6)

B. Time phrases
(1) in + date (e.g. in 1972)
(2) on + specific date (e.g. *on 5th March 1972*)

No new vocabulary will be introduced, but some vocabulary will be revised: simple past tense verb forms e.g. *was born, lived, went, left, arrived, came,* etc.

Teaching Considerations
Cultural Assumptions:
(1) that all students will have attended some school in the course of their lives in their own country;
(2) that students are willing to talk about important events in their own lives;
(3) that students know their date of birth;
(4) that date of birth is the first important event in their lives.

Linguistic assumptions:
(1) that students have had experience with wh- question forms;
(2) that vocabulary in English relating to past life events is known;
(3) that dates, months, etc in English are known.

Organisational Concerns/Aids:
(1) Time-line will be given to students to fill in for a named partner. This is to encourage movement between cultural and friendship groups to give the activity more meaning.
(2) Homework sheets
(3) Flash cards.
(4) Extra copies of the Time Line sheets.
(5) Stimulus picture - Buckley and time-line.

Teaching Focus:
The focus of this session is to increase awareness among students of the experiences their peers have had and to highlight the similarities and differences in their lives.

(Cont.)

Student Activity	Teacher Activity	Linguistic Objectives	Time
2 students participate Others listen	1) Warmer: Noughts & Crosses T chooses 2 students to play. T draws grid on board T asks Player 1 to spell a word from vocabulary from sessions 4-7. T displays cue card to class as player is spelling. If he is correct, he fills in a x on the grid. T asks Player 2 to spell Vocabulary - simple past verbs.	Revise vocabulary (lexical sets)	5 mins
Students listen	2) T links this session with Session 7 by showing completed timeline for William Buckley (WB) and picture of WB.	Developing listening-for-detail skills & reading from graphic while recapping previous work.	5 mins
Students give information	T elicits (i) name of time line & (ii) what information is contained in it (i.e. important events in life).	Practising giving vocab Selecting appropriate vocab.	
Students monitor teacher writing	T writes up elicited information on board in order given.		
Students choose relevant vocab.	T elicits which of these would be in a timeline for their own life. T erases those not needed for ss' own timelines (e.g. death)		
Students provide vocab.	T elicits any that are not on board. T elicits appropriate verb form for each event & writes it in grid on board.		
Students listen	T hands out unfilled-in timeline (see Handout 1) T instructs students to fill in timeline for their own lives.	Developing writing skills	10 mins
Students complete timelines (writing)	T fills in board grid with information about a person known to students. Durmus Ahmet (D A)		
Students look & listen	T points to 1977 on time line on board		2 mins
Students answer concept questions orally	T asks check questions: *What happened in 1977?* *How old was D A in 1977?* T elicits sentence: *D A left Cyprus in 1977* from several students.	Establishing & checking concept of past time	
Students give answers orally	T asks concept questions: *Is he in Cyprus now ?* *Was he in Cyprus in 1976 ?* *Was he in Cyprus in 1978 ?*		
Students give information required orally	T elicits questions necessary to complete the board grid e.g. *What did I ask D to get this information ?* T writes up elicited questions on board.	Asking questions about the past	10 mins
Students listen & repeat	Drill T models each question once. Choral drill/individual drill x 3. Chain practice: S1 asks S2, S2 asks S3, etc	Focus on accurate pronunciation	5 mins
	T hands out new timeline grid sheet with names on them (Handout 2).		8 mins
Students move to named partner & ask questions to complete time line (writing)	T instructs students to fill in the missing information by asking the person named on their sheet the questions on the board.	Speaking skills. Listening for information. Asking questions. Writing.	
1 student speaking others listening for information.	T consolidates activity by asking one student to tell class about his partner (*Minh was born in . .*)	Reporting. Reading from written information.	3 mins
	T hands out homework Homework: Answer questions based on Durmus' timeline.		1 min

(Cont.)

Handout (1) Classwork
(for student to fill in about self, Session 8).

Name ....

Timeline

Year	Age	Event
....	0	Was born in ....
198....		started Year 11 at................................

You can use these verbs to help you finish your timeline:

- went to
- lived
- left
- arrived in
- came to
- moved to
- enrolled in
- escaped from
- travelled to

Handout (2) for pair work in class (Session 8)

Name: (of selected student)...

Year	Age	Event
....	......	was born in.................................
....	......	went to school in..........................
....	......	left his home country
....	......	arrived in Australia •
....	......	went to English classes
....	......	came to this school
....	......	started Year 11 at this school

Homework (after Session 8)

Name...

Timeline - Durmus Ahmet

Year	Age	Event
1946	0	was born in Aydin in Cyprus.
1952	6	went to primary school in Aydin.
1957	11	went to secondary school in Larnaca.
1965	19	left secondary school.
1966	20	went to university in Turkey.
1977	31	left Cyprus to come to Australia.
1977	31	arrived in Melbourne.
1978	32	went to English classes at RMIT.
1980	34	came to this school.

Finish these sentences:

1. When he was ...., Durmus went to primary school.
2. When he was 10,...
3. When he was 18,...
4. ...., Durmus went to university.
5. ...., Durmus arrived in Melbourne.
6. .... when he was 30.
7. .... when he was 33.

Session 8 Board summary

Durmus Ahmet

Year	Age	Event	Questions
1946	0	was born in Aydin etc	
			When was he born ? Where was he born ? etc.
1977	31	migrated to Australia	When did he migrate to Australia ?
1980	34	came to this school	
1987			

Birth Marriage Transportation

Death Migration Jobs Schooling etc.

Nola Philip is currently teaching and developing ESL materials at Broadmeadows College of TAFE in Melboune. She was a teacher of ESL at a postprimary technical school for many years and has also taught mainstream subjects in postprimary schools.

Questioning

Sandra Bouwmans presents an abridged version of the module on Questioning which is contained in the NSW Department of Education inservice training package *Encouraging Successful Learning: Language Strategies and Activities for all teachers of NESB students Years 7-12.* It is intended to help all teachers use questioning techniques to develop the English as well as the conceptual skills of their students. See *TESOL Resources* for how to obtain the package.

The excerpts are from material on

1. types of questions
2. writing questions so as to give students a framework for answering
3. organising groups for interactive work on a topic
4. preparatory and predictive activities to introduce a topic

1. *The types of questions* we ask our students largely determine the opportunities we give them to move beyond the wall of basic facts and to develop and use critical language and thinking skills.

Good questions encourage students to think. However, an increasing body of evidence reveals that the majority of classroom and textbook questions require little more than memorised responses. It is estimated that 60% of all teachers' questions require students to recall facts, 20% require higher level thinking skills and 20% are concerned with procedural matters.

Questions can be divided into approximately six categories, ranging from knowledge and application questions through to more complicated, creative or evaluative questions. Examples of these types of questions have been taken from seven subject areas and strategies have been suggested to help teachers prepare their NESB students to respond appropriately to these questions.

A. *Knowledge Questions:* usually seek factual answers.

Examples:

Who wrote ....?
Name three Ancient Roman gods.
What is the inverse of the sine ratio?
Define "monetary policy".
List the stylistic features of this extract ....
How many primary colours are there?
State Le Chatelier's Principle.

Note: NESB students can often answer knowledge questions without having understood the questions or the content.

B. *Comprehension Questions:* These are questions which ask students to indicate their understanding of ideas and information in text.

Examples:

Why did Macbeth kill Duncan?
How did the Ancient Egyptians embalm their dead?
Explain the difference between S.I. and C.I.
In your own words, explain the origin of the "Blues".
Describe the water cycle.
Compare weathering and erosion.

Responses may include words and phrases that signal the structures to be used:

comparison e.g.

... the same as ....

... both A and B ....

contrast e.g.

A ... but B ....

A ... whereas B ....

reason e.g.

because, as, since ....

cause and effect e.g.

due to, is caused by ....

The language structures that feature in these answers should be pretaught so students know how to formulate their answers.

C. *Application Questions:* demand that students apply facts or ideas given in text in a new context.

Examples:

Use sin A = 3/5 to evaluate tan A.
If $x = 2$ *and* $y = 5$*, evaluate* $x^2 - y^2$.
Classify the ads as informative, persuasive or both. (examples)
Give an example of a song which uses a 12 bar blues ostinato.
If colours can affect your feelings, what colour would be best to create a feeling of tranquillity?
Classify the following foods into the five food groups: ....
Choose which of the following are examples of chemical/physical weathering: ....

Words and phrases commonly needed for responses are:

- *so, thus, consequently, as a result, therefore, if . . . then . . .*
- *because, since*

D. *Reasoning Questions:* require that students analyse text or items of information within text.

Examples:

What were the major results of W.W.I?
Solve for x giving reasons at each stage.
Why does Tony Packard advertise in this way? (example)
On what grounds was "Rock and Roll" considered "jungle" music by many adults in the 1950's?
Why do we see colours?
Give reasons why temperature affects reaction rate (of chemicals x, y, z).
What are the factors affecting the establishment of factory x at y?

The recording of answers to these questions often requires that:

- students refer to the original information to give examples which substantiate their opinions/conclusions *e.g. as mentioned, as can be seen, as illustrated, this means, one reason for this, as exemplified in*
- students record the relevant information in a logical and well ordered sequence *e.g. first, next, finally.*

E. *Creative Questions:* often involve students in synthesising information in text, that is putting together items of information that are scattered in text, so that their joint implications can be recognised. Alternatively, they may require that students apply or incorporate information given in a new and imaginative way.

(Cont.)

Examples:

Imagine you are character x. Describe what you would do if . . . .

Suppose you were a woman in Viking times. What sort of a life would you have had?
What would be the effect of increasing x?
Develop an advertisement for a new car. This may be in the form of a poster.
Imagine you are in the court of Henry VIII. Describe the type of music you would expect to hear.
Predict the outcome of a red spot on a blue background.
What would happen if (these) plants were deprived of sunshine?

Many responses to these questions require the use of:

- personal speculative language *e.g. I think, believe, expect . . . . .*
- the language of justification *e.g. because, on the grounds that, in the light of. . . . .*
- language signaling degrees of possibility or probability *e.g. it's possible / probable that . . . . . , perhaps, maybe, definitely, undoubtedly, could possibly, would probably.*
- conditional structures.

F. *Evaluation Questions:* involve students in making a considered judgement about text or ideas contained within text. They ask that students respond, analyse their response and discover the objective reasons for it. They also require that students assess how effectively the author of the work has achieved the presumed intention or purpose.

Examples

What are the advantages of using graphs in practical situations?
Should we have advertising or not?
Comment on the composer's use of timbre and rhythm in the following excerpt.

Responses to evaluation questions involve the use of:

- personal, evaluative language *e.g. I think / believe / feel / consider that, in my opinion, as I see it, it seems to me that, my view is that . . . . .*
- **the language of justification (see Creative Questions).**

2. *Writing questions to give the framework for answering.*

The following are strategies to assist students in formulating responses to written questions. Although guidelines are provided in writing, teachers need to check to make sure students understand how to use them.

Example 1:

Beneath each question, record an incomplete answer which students must finish. *e.g. What does the word pharaoh mean?*
The word pharaoh means . . . .

Who wrote the The Guardians?
. . . . .wrote The Guardians.

Example 2:

As above, with the addition of clues for each blank space.
e.g. Where did the Vikings come from?
The Vikings came from . . . .
(country)

Give the formula for S.I. . . . .
(equation)

Example 3:

In each question, selected words are underlined. These indicate the way to begin the answer.
e.g. Predict the outcome of a red spot on a blue background.
Explain the origin of "the blues".

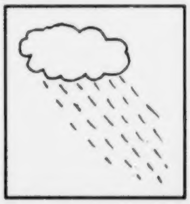
Example 4:

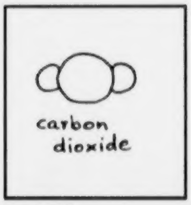
Each question is accompanied by a series of clues which provide the framework for the answer.
e.g. Define a triangle.
Triangles / "have" / sides / angles "be"

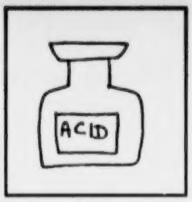
Compare weathering and erosion.
Weathering / definition / but whereas while / erosion / definition.

Example 5:

Each question is accompanied by one or a series of illustrations/diagrams which embody key points or ideas which should be mentioned. These may be labelled. Alternatively, a word or series of words may be provided.
e.g. How are limestone caves formed?







or

carbon dioxide acid rain water

Example 6:

Indicate the language patterns needed for different questions/answers.
e.g. State Le Chatelier's principle

..........is..........
..........is defined as ....
..........refers to..........

Explain the difference between S.I. and C.I.

..........whereas..........
..........while..........
...........but..........

Example 7:

Provide students with a series of statements to be designated "TRUE" or "FALSE". Students must identify the ones they believe correct and then justify their choices in small group or class discussion.

Example 8:

Students are provided with a series of multiple choice questions. Students attempt the answers individually or in small groups. In correction at a class level, students/groups are encouraged to state their choices for each question, in turn, and justify their answer. Used in this manner, multiple choice questions can provide valuable insight into the nature and extent of potential areas of difficulty in text.

Example 9:

Break complex questions down into a series of simpler statements which indicate the aspects which must be taken into account when answering.
e.g. What were the advantages and disadvantages of selecting "Australia" as a penal colony?

- What is a penal colony ?
  or
- A penal colony is . . . . .
- Why were they established ?
  or
- They were established to . . . . .
- Why was "Australia" a good place for a penal colony?
- Why wasn't "Australia" a good place for a penal colony? **(Cont.)**

Example 10:

Indicate key words in a question to focus students' attention on the main issues/content.
e.g. ***Compare*** *the* ***dole today*** *with the* ***susso*** *in the* ***1930's****.*

Example 11:

Use lines to indicate the length of the answer required or anticipated.
e.g. What is an urban area?

____

What services would you expect to find in an urban area?

____

____

____

Example 12:

If scores are to be allocated for students' answers, include the marking scale to be used so as to indicate the amount of attention students should give to each question.
e.g. Who killed Macbeth? (1)

Do you think Macbeth would have killed Duncan if he had not heard the witches' prophecies? (5)

Example 13:

Indicate the approximate location of the answer within text.
e.g. paragraph 2 (par. 3)
2nd stanza
line 14 (l. 14)
page 27 (p. 27)
subsection, Woollens : Texture
chapter 2
column 3, page 56.

Example 14:

Provide students with a diagrammatic representation to summarise the organisation of ideas/information within text as a point of reference for students when completing questions.

e.g. Topic: Chemical Reactions

par. 1: definition what they are
par. 2: causes or why they occur
par. 3: effects / results what happens
par. 4: implications / issues. what we need to know or think about.

Example 15:

The following strategy has particular application for projects, assignments and practical tasks. It can also be useful with regard to questions which focus upon the sequencing implicit in processes and procedures and to those requiring extended or lengthy answers.

Issue students with a series of statements or words which provide the framework for the answer required.
e.g. How did the Ancient Egyptians embalm their dead?
Mention: who did this work
how much it cost
how it was done:
first . . . . . .
next . . . . . .
after 70 days
finally . . . . . .
what happened to the dead person's organs
e.g. heart, liver
what the final product was called
what they did once the body had been embalmed.

3. *Organising groups for interactive work on a topic*

- use group work so that students work initially with a partner/ with other students to clarify questions, engage in discussion of key ideas and information and formulate responses.
- structure groups so the NESB students are supported and guided by students who are native speakers of English.
- ensure that over a given period of time (e.g. a week on a topic of study) all students take a turn as spokesperson for the group in reporting back.

4. *Preparatory and predictive activities to introduce a topic*

- students may be asked to formulate the questions on a given topic or text to which they would like answers. In being involved in this process, students can be made aware of the different ways a question can be phrased and the different implications of the different question types. They will then be in a better position to answer the questions that are eventually asked.
- as a class, construct a structured overview of the topic or text under review. Together, formulate a number of questions to make sense of this information.
- involve students in drama activities so that they must explore and express their understanding of a topic or concept. Use their improvisation to gauge the extent of their understanding and as the basis for questions which demand that they describe, clarify and explain what they have done.
- use games and/or drama activities to revise or consolidate content and language skills.
- move from concrete issues and ideas into the more abstract. Ensure that students understand factual topic content before asking that they apply or interpret it. This may involve the use of visual stimulus e.g. videos, illustrations.
- encourage students to speculate about what they might need to know about a topic. Encourage them to pose the problems to which the topic study will offer some solutions. In this way their attention can be focused.

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TESOL TALK

Stepping Out

Ruth Wajnryb interviewed Ben Taaffe who is an English teacher in a Sydney high school where he has taught since completing his BA (Hons) Dip Ed at Sydney University in the early seventies. In 1988 he successfully completed a TESOL Certificate which gave him a specialist qualification in teaching English to adults. He plans a career change from mainstream high school teaching to the teaching of English as a Foreign Language to English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students. In extracts from the interview, Ben talks about his career switch, his TESOL training and the relevance of his teaching background to working with ESL students.

RW: Ben, I understand you went out last year and became an EFL teacher. How many years had you already been a teacher?

BT: At that stage, fifteen years; this is my sixteenth year teaching English in a Sydney high school.

RW: Can I ask you, then, what brought you to the world of ESL?

BT: A couple of factors. The first is that I feel my teaching is slowing up. It's nowhere near as good as it was six or seven years ago. I suppose I'm a bit bored, a bit jaded, doing the same sorts of lessons. It's harder to do the job now than it was. What I wanted to do was to go back to study and to get a teaching qualification which would enliven my teaching again. ESL teaching, I figured, might be a way of bringing regular English teaching back to a little more life. That was the first reason; the second one was ESL itself. I'm interested, I think, in stepping sideways and moving out of the mainstream of English teaching into teaching non-native speakers. To do that I needed the qualification.

RW: Do you know much about non-native speakers? The language problems they have?

BT: No, I don't.

RW: Have you ever lived in a non-English speaking country ?

BT: No. Limited visits to European countries, trips through Asia.

RW: So . . . how did you find doing the TESOL course?

BT: At the time it was very difficult and demanding, and after about three weeks I remember I was ready to throw the whole thing away in frustration. But a friend persuaded me to stick it out. Now, I'm pleased I did finish it all and it did go very well.

RW: Can you highlight the source of that frustration?

BT: There were several sources. It's very difficult to marry a full-time teaching job with two very full evenings per week doing anything.

RW: What about the curriculum of study? Was there any frustration there?

BT: Yes, there was. There was to my mind too little emphasis week to week on survival in the classroom, on how the lesson would go.

RW: So, do you think then a pre-service trainee, even someone like you who's mastered the classroom management side of things, needs more classroom tips?

BT: Yes, I do. I still need a lot more time on how to plan a lesson, how to time a lesson and how to find a new proportion in an English lesson to ESL students in contrast to the lessons I give all the time to native speakers. The course was very good, there's no doubt about that; it's because it was a very good course that I feel that I can make these criticisms of it.

RW: Are you teaching ESL now?

BT: Yes, I am. For the last couple of years, we've had groups of Chinese students from Hong Kong. Some of them are near-native in their fluency (in English), others are certainly not. The principal has decided that we really do need some ESL work. So I have four sessions a week with fifteen students broken up into groups of different sorts. Writing skills and conversation, and I am certainly putting into practice a lot of what I learnt last year. The final piece of work that we had to do for the course was to create a syllabus for a very specific target group of English language learners. I chose a group of Japanese students based on one particular student I had taught two years ago. The demands that are put onto a Japanese student are very similar to those on people from Hong Kong, and a lot of the lesson plans that I came up with for that syllabus I can put right into practice in the classroom. So in that case the course, demanding as it was, did me an enormous favour because it equipped me with one to two months' worth of lessons which I had already worked out and which I could test in the classroom knowing exactly what I was planning to do and to see what adaptations I would need to make.

RW: So in the last year, you've picked up a qualification and some experience in the field. Thinking back to yourself at the beginning of your TESOL training and you now, post-training, post-some experience, how do you look at the field of second or foreign language teaching?

BT: I'm more aware now than I was at the beginning of the course - and I'm more aware week by week - of my own ignorance of language and of structures, and uncertainties about how to proceed. This doesn't stop me. I enjoy teaching, learning about teaching and improving my own teaching. That's one point. The second thing - now this is something which affects both individual lessons and the sequence of a month's teaching - is the question of timing. I realise that what I've learnt in sixteen years in the classroom is how to cover a great deal of material very quickly. For sixteen years, I've been teaching Higher School Certificate classes where you have a very limited amount of time in which to cover a series of texts for an examination. We have a syllabus for each year which is designed a year in

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advance. The kids have the books, we have to cover it all. So what I've learnt in sixteen years is how to go very quickly and efficiently. In teaching second language learners, I find now I'm going too quickly.

RW:So, am I right in thinking that that's one of the things you'd be looking to unlearn?

BT: Yes. I have to unlearn that old proportion of timing and learn a new proportion. Put simply, to learn how to slow down. (For example) I find that I have a plan for a conversation class which will require the Chinese kids to practise their tenses because if there's one thing where they always make mistakes, it's in moving between tenses in a very erratic way and I'm trying to make very finite for them the uses of simple past, simple present perfect, simple present and the contexts in which they make sense. To my mind, to start with, I would give one lesson and think, "OK, that's fine, that's clear," and I wouldn't think that there would have to be two follow-up lessons.

RW:Only two!

BT: Yes. I'm having to learn a new proportion with second language learners. Basically I'm having to learn to slow down, to limit what I want to do and to do the same lesson four times in different ways so that they will in fact get the same skills but they'll get them in enough variety to keep them interested.

RW:As someone once said, "To repeat without boring."

BT: Yes. Part of my speed, I suppose, is my nervousness.

RW:You've talked about the things you had to unlearn and relearn and readjust. What about the skills that you've brought with you from the mainstream? Skills that as an experienced teacher you find are portable from one teaching environment to another.

BT: Very portable is the sense of the blackboard. I'm one of the few teachers I know who uses the blackboard to teach English. Partly it's to keep myself interested in the lessons so that I can follow them; partly it's because I believe that critical diagrams, by which I mean examples under headings and relationships between headings, are a fundamental way of learning. One of the foundation stones you're teaching to native speakers is analytical thinking and analytical method, and the simplest definition of that is the logical relationship between two different ideas under two different headings. In order to teach that you really need to be able to use the blackboard very simply. You have to be able to divide it into various sections, use diagrams, explain separate ideas, ideas which intersect, ideas which unite. This is very portable for ESL teaching.

RW:Yes I can see that overlap. Is there anything else that springs to mind?

BT: Yes, there's the sense of teaching as a performance. Students expect of teachers the same thing that audiences expect of actors. They expect someone who has very specific aims, makes clear what they are and fulfils them. They expect someone who will sustain the lesson as the actor will sustain the performance-beginning to end. Audiences and students resent that professional in front of them who doesn't have a sense of where he's going and even if you don't, you have to role-play a confident person. And when you do, students and audiences are immediately responsive. Even if they disagree with what you are saying, they have a respect for someone who is in command of the material.

RW:You made an analogy between the teacher and the theatre-arts. I suppose there's an overlap there with voice quality, voice production and voice management. What did you discover there?

BT: I discovered once again that I speak too quickly. Everyone's told me that for years, everyone who's watched my lessons has. I try to be aware of it, I truly do, but I still speak very quickly.

RW:The more so I suppose for the non-native listener.

BT: Yes.

RW:Getting back to those things that are portable from the mainstream to ESL, what about people skills, an individual's semi-intuitive sense of how people learn? Do you think you're carrying those sorts of skills across?

BT: Yes and in a way that's the problem. I bring a vast cargo of skills and I have to work out which of those skills I can put into practice straight away, which I have to set aside for a while, and which I have to learn a new proportion for. Most of the mistakes I've made have been to put my native-speaker teacher methods into practice straight away and not allow for a greater time to understand the new proportion. This for example became very clear when I realised that the "wait-time" that follows questions to non-native speakers is very different from that with native speakers. But what was very clear to me was that I had to make the mistake, realise the problem, be given sound advice as to how to remedy it, and try again and see that it worked.

RW:On a related point, this reminds me of the fact that having trained a lot of teachers retraining as TESOL people, one recurring feature is a certain resistance to taking on new skills; what I mean is that because such teachers already have an accumulated learned cargo of skills and in a way need refocusing or readjusting, there is sometimes a reluctance to let go of the known, to take on the less known, the less secure. Were you ever aware of a resistance in you to the training you undertook?

BT: In the question of grammatical terminology yes, less so in the matter of teaching skills because I welcomed the sharpening of these skills.

RW:One final question, Ben. What advice would you give to someone planning the same career move as you, stepping from the mainstream?

BT: I think I would recommend the virtue of patience - patience in putting all your ideas and preconceptions back on the shelf. Everything which you think and believe about language and learning has to be re-tested. Nothing at all can be assumed to be right. It all has to be reassessed. I'm talking about an openness, a very critical openness that allows you to take it all in and use it productively so that ultimately you find the right proportion, the proportion that works for you.

RW:Ben, I'd like to thank you for sharing your thoughts on this subject and also, of course, to wish you well in your new career.

Ruth Wajnryb is currently Coordinator of Teacher Development at Sydney English Language Centre. She has had extensive teaching experience in Australia, Europe, the Middle East and South America, where she worked as an TESOL teacher and teacher trainer. She is also the author of TESOL textbooks.

TESOL REVIEWER

Recent publications are available at no cost, for review. Reviewers retain the books and kits free for their personal use. If you are interested in reviewing books of your choice, contact the Book Review Editor.

***Longman Keys to Language Teaching* series**
Neville Grant (series editor)
Longman Cheshire 1988
$10.99 each title
Reviewed by Ruth Wajnryb, Sydney English Language Centre, New South Wales

The Preface to the books in this series from Longman reads:

"...Most ordinary teachers are short of almost everything except students. They have little time for theories and time-consuming routines. In particular, they don't have time for long books full of complicated jargon".

The series editor goes on to state that the *Key* series has been especially written for "the ordinary teacher" in that it offers sound practical down-to-earth advice on basic techniques and approaches in the classroom. The material is designed to be used and adapted for any situation.

Not liking the term *ordinary* perhaps compelled me to look for other terms in which to describe the intended reader. I see that person or target client as being the pre-service TESOL trainee or beginning teacher with minimal experience who is teaching in a work context that may include large classes, mixed levels, and text-book bound students.

With this client firmly in mind the books set out with few assumptions about background and as few pretensions about the client's teaching context. The text is clear, easy to access and the expression is quite remarkably jargon-free. Chapters end with succinct summaries; extension work is built in with a recurring section called *questions and activities* and further recommended reading. Headings, sub-titles, boxed sections and point-form notes all render the material very user-friendly.

Currently there are four such Longman keys titles available: *Making the most of your textbook* by Neville Grant; *Teaching and learning grammar* by Jeremy Harmer; *Techniques for classroom interaction* by Donn Byrne; and *Effective class management* by Mary Underwood. The authors are all household names in TESOL having already published widely and established their credibility as TESOL professionals and educators. They have all changed their usual style of writing to accommodate the series' brief (the ordinary teacher). Forthcoming titles include: *Teaching Children, Exams and Tests, Teaching Vocabulary and Errors: causes, prevention and cure.*

One might say that the series is unique in that previously teacher trainees or beginning teachers have had to go to the particular chapter of a general reference book (e.g. Hubbard et al. *A Training course for TESOL* or Harmer *The Practice of English Teaching*) to do some reading on a TESOL topic area of interest to them. Now they have their own series with each title dedicated to a particular sub-specialty in the field of TESOL.

1. *Making the most of your textbook* is a particularly helpful book for the beginning teacher. It shows teachers how to have the best of both worlds -the security, anchor and direction that a textbook can provide without the constraints and restrictions that this usually implies. Harmer begins by dividing books into two general categories: traditional and communicative. In fact, *traditional* turns out to mean form dominated, reading/writing oriented, first language influenced, accuracy bound, structurally sequenced, examination oriented and generally not very nice. On the other hand, *communicative* decodes as meaning learner centred, skills based, and fluency oriented with a focus on the oral/aural, authentic language and group work. The division into communicative and non-communicative, although simplistic, does in the end serve the reader for much of the book is about making communicative what is essentially non-communicative.

Grant asks the teacher to assess books on the basis of two questions: is the material suitable? are the methods suitable? The answers, of course, require the teacher to have a good knowledge of the learners involved - their level, background, needs, learning styles, learning objectives etc. Then the rest of the book is all about practical suggestions for adapting, replacing, omitting or adding to a base textbook.

The book is organised around the four skills and examines the ways in which textbooks usually present such material and ways in which the communicative power of the textbook can be maximised. The book is full of lists of suggested activities for enhancing the textbook that you are using. There are loads of examples taken from (predominantly but not exclusively British) books. As well as providing sound and practical advice the book is a review of basic principles in the methodology of teaching. (Incidentally, I also learned a new acronym from it: TENOR Teaching English for No Obvious Reason).

2. *Teaching and learning English* is a user-friendly, totally jargon-free, unthreatening introduction to the basics of how some people learn grammar and how other people teach it. Despite a faintly contrastivist bent, Jeremy Harmer takes the reader through a general introduction to the place of grammar in language teaching/learning: a survey of problem areas (e.g. function and form; LI interference; dealing with exceptions); a section on presentation strategies; one on more inductive approaches; and one on techniques for practising grammar; and a final section on testing grammar. There is an important interactive note to the

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book with pre-section questionnaires to brainstorm ideas and built-in tasks to set the reader thinking on main issues; plus a summary section and follow-up exercises, and reading at the end. There are tables, diagrams, pictures, extracts from materials books and lots of helpful tips and pointers. The beauty of it is that it assumes nothing.

3. *Techniques for classroom interaction* begins with the presentation of six different classroom situations which are analysed so as to induce basic principles about patterns of interaction that are possible in a language learning context. This provides the foundation on which the rest of the book is based. This book in fact is a veritable resource for the beginning teacher who has been made aware of the need for a variety of patterns of interaction and is looking for ways to reduce teacher talking time and increase student talking time. The book pivots on a scheme of dimensional analysis depicting a plethora of classroom activities on a continuum of teacher controlled/learner directed and another of accuracy/fluency. This enables the teacher to select an activity not just to fill in a time slot or even to match up with a language exponent but to choose intelligently and analytically - knowing what purpose is being aimed for and knowing what roles the teacher and learners will have. The scheme is explained early in the book and the rest of the contents provide examples of various of the categories in the schema: classroom accuracy work, classroom fluency work, group accuracy work and group fluency work. There are also helpful suggestions to guide the appropriate selection of activity and an index of activities at the back to facilitate access and referral. Donn Byrne's book will help teachers with informed decision making in the classroom.

4. *Effective class management* is a thorough handbook of the basics of classroom management for beginning teachers. Without actually saying so, it appears to be addressing the particular needs of non-native speaking teachers of EFL secondary age students. It still, however, has a lot to say that would benefit a native-speaking teacher of adult classes being taught in an English-speaking environment. The fact that the book is able to speak effectively to such a wide reading audience arises from that fact that it offers a thorough briefing in the basics of classroom management which to a large extent apply to every teaching/learning situation. Mary Underwood begins with three areas with which a teacher should establish familiarity: oneself, one's school and one's students. She then moves on to considerations of the classroom itself, ways of encouraging a positive atmosphere and ways of improving learning (factors like acoustics, lines of vision, layout of furniture). Underwood then moves to questions of teacher preparation and ways in which the teacher can improve his/her efficiency (like preparation, classroom signalling of activity changes, lesson closure routines). Then we have a section on hardware designed for the faintly technophobic teacher and finally, a section on reducing the teacher's workload with realistic suggestions for streamlining work and making the working day more efficient.

Having read the early titles in the *Longman Keys to Language Teaching* series, I am impressed by the concept - a set of titles catering to the teacher-in-training or the beginning teacher; the choice of topic areas; and the uniform clarity of style and purpose that gives the series both continuity and cohesion. I have no doubt that these keys will open doors for teachers and I look forward to more titles in the series.

Learning English Through Topics About Asia

Bill Cleland and Ruth Evans
Longman Cheshire 1988
Student's Book $18.75
Teacher's Book $15.95
Reviewed by Tony Ferguson, Footscray City Secondary College, Victoria

"The learning of a second language should be both interesting and intellectually stimulating".

"We have deliberately chosen work that is of a challenging standard as, too often, students are left stranded at a particular level of language acquisition without really progressing any further".

These two statements by Bill Cleland and Ruth Evans in the *Teacher's Book* are indicative of the level and intention of this third publication in their series of ESL Topic Books. Their aim is to develop students' knowledge of English through materials in history, geography and economics (in which, as we well know, there are few available materials suitable for non-English speaking background students). These materials are emphatically for intermediate to advanced students in middle and upper secondary classes and possibly suitable for preparatory tertiary and tertiary students in other settings.

As in the other Topic Books, students are to be enabled to use subject specialist language and to develop a range of study skills, including the interpretation and description of graphs, maps, tables, diagrams and statistics. Students are assumed to be ready to go beyond the concreteness of the science topics in Cleland and Evans' first book into more abstract concepts and language. Reading passages cover narrative, descriptive and analytical argumentive styles.

Topics about Asia were chosen not only because of the origins of more and more of the ESL client group; but because of Australia's location and the growth in mainstream Asian studies courses.

The *Teacher's Book* contains a Preface and an Introduction which includes: What is the Topic Approach? Why use the Topic Approach for Teaching ESL? What are the Implications of the Topic Approach? How to Prepare a Topic. There is also a Bibliography, notes for Teaching Individual Topics and Blackline Masters of the main visuals. Although this format will be familiar to users of *Learning English through General Science* and *Learning English through Topics about Australia*, the content of the Introduction has been revised and extended. Explanations and arguments have been made both more comprehensive and more explicit. The are well worth reading and very clear.

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The *Topic Approach* itself retains its four stages:

1. Visual Presentation (which remains so important as to require several hours class time)
2. Building a Reading Passage
3. Analysing and Extending a Reading Passage
4. Creating a Passage - Final Writing.

However, emphases are variable and there is a wider variety of activities in the various stages. For example, it is suggested that for the first stage, one way of involving more advanced students is to have them work in groups to interpret the visual materials for themselves and report back to the whole class. Throughout there is much more emphasis on and an attempt to draw upon students' own abilities, knowledge and ideas in order to give them confidence and to get them to take responsibility for their own learning. This way of thinking about the Visual Presentation would also make it more adaptable and applicable to mainstream and multi-ethnic subject classes.

Topics about Asia require students to develop closer and more sustained analysis of concepts and language at word, sentence and discourse levels. The materials provided here for stage 3 provide more grammatical support for students than the previous books. As well as explanations and examples to follow (which were not always sufficient for some students), there are tables of the target grammatical patterns using the content of the topic very precisely, so that students can write grammatically correct or elaborated sentences, but they cannot produce them mechanically - they also have to come to grips with the content and make choices to express correct or sensible meanings. This Extension stage includes greater use of short and long answer comprehension questions like those used in school assignments. This is appropriate not only for teaching for mainstream practices, but because the topic is so much more elaborated and complex.

The fourth stage has been explicitly modified to encompass Donald Graves' processes of drafting, conferencing, editing, publishing for an audience other than the teacher and learner ownership of writing.

The section on How to Prepare (your own) Topic is even more helpful and includes some well-advised discussion of authenticity, which requires teachers to write their own Reading Passages as the authors have done rather than extract slabs of text from elsewhere, which results in distorted discourse structures.

This section of the *Teachers Book* in discussing 'Rounding off a topic' extends the Topic Approach almost into a fifth stage with more complex and challenging discussion questions for students, suggestions for student research and the use of literary English and literature of various kinds.

Topics about Asia demonstrates a strength of the Topic Approach and its authors: they and it move with the times and take on board recent developments in language pedagogy and curriculum issues. Well-trained teachers can use it in this spirit without succumbing to the baby-out-with-the-bath-water extremes of methodological fashion changes.

Using the materials. As with the other Topic Approach books, this is a collection of self-contained, non-sequential topics (though some could be linked and develop themes) intended for one component of an ESL course. It is not an ESL course in itself. Language material is spiralled and does not assume mastery at any point, though the book does assume ability or willingness to make meaning out of sophisticated written inputs. Many of the Tables and other non verbal materials for Visual Presentations, as printed, contain a great deal of verbal material at significant levels of abstraction and the individual teacher would have to provide appropriate extra visual material.

My experience of using two of the Topics made very clear the need for each teacher to study the teacher's notes and students' book very closely in relation to the particular class to work out the way to approach any particular topic and how visual and concrete the visual presentation needs to be.

In my mixed Year 10 Social Studies for ESL students class, the materials worked best for the maturer students who were reasonably fluent and who had a basic understanding of English grammar. (These latter were graduates of a semester-length Migrant Access Program for 16-24 year olds). They were interested and curious and the Approach enabled them to come to terms with complex material at a time when they were not able to cope with other mainstream classes which were arguably intellectually less demanding, but inaccessible because of unsupported and highly abstract language use, lack of adequate input on underlying concepts and consideration of students' knowledge and experience and inadequate classroom management. The materials were too difficult for other students who had been in Australian educational settings for less than about two years or who had had more seriously disrupted schooling.

The Topics are: The Relief of Southeast Asia, Rice Growing in Asia, The Buddha, The Spread of Islam in Maritime Southeast Asia, The Industrial Structure of Southeast Asia and Australia, The Climate of Thailand and Indo-China, The Long March, Mahatma Gandhi, The Second World War, The Atomic Bombing of Japan, Vietnam: Education and Language, The Four Stages of Population Growth.

As in the other books in the series, teacher's notes for each Topic specify the language focus (functions, grammar, key items), aim, concepts, equipment and resources, suggestions for teaching the visual stage, large blackline masters to photocopy for students, labelled versions of the latter for the teacher and teacher reference lists. The aims of particular topics are appropriately linguistic, conceptual (context-centred) and attitudinal.

In one or two topics, I found the visuals or the Reading Passages did not make a particular target concept explicit enough for my liking and depended on students bringing a deal of interpretative skill to a text.

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Cleland and Evans discuss in their Introduction their experience of modifying the Topic Approach for use with ESL students with reading and writing difficulties, using the visual presentation in the most concrete way and a language experience approach to allow students to make their own 'story'. They recommend gradually introducing the worksheets and further exercises until students can complete a full unit. This would seem to be more easily done with the Science topics. Most of these Topics about Asia would probably require a rather more radical and imaginative re-creation. I believe these particular Topics as written would best suit literate intermediate/advanced students with minimally disrupted previous schooling who need to transfer their knowledge, concepts and skills into English while maintaining their intellectual development.

I have found that these Topics can be taught in ESL classes which run parallel to mainstream classes in a secondary school timetable, but I think they would work better in more substantial, sustained and flexible timetable settings, such as full-time or intensive courses, transition classes, migrant access classes, English for Academic Purposes courses.

Learning English through Topics about Asia is challenging material for the ESL teacher. It supports her in offering her a great deal, but no easy ways out. The *Teacher's Book* offers a valuable, concise statement of many aspects of state-of-the-art integrated language and learning pedagogy in a style and language I wish the international highfliers would emulate.

A teacher using this approach has to develop a range of skills to become both jack and master of all trades. She needs confidence, thorough knowledge of content and language, skills in curriculum needs analysis, language analysis, resourcefulness and imagination. She has to be a finder, collector and creator of aids and equipment, a writer, a negotiator, an editor and a publisher as well as having a sound TESOL technique in the narrower sense and good classroom management skills. Just how demanding *Topics about Asia* can be becomes clear when you try to induct a student teacher into it. It is a challenge for the ESL teacher to rise to.

Bill Cleland and Ruth Evans had already risen to the challenge officially enunciated in the 1986 Campbell Review of the ESL Program: *Bridging the Gap*, which reflected widespread concern that ESL provision for students too often stops prematurely short. They have done this by providing material for extending students' English for serious, mainstream curriculum purposes and probably more importantly by providing an improved model for writing TESOL materials to meet the needs of students who have apparently achieved a degree of mastery of English at the communicative, inter-personal and 'survival' level but who require supported development of cognitive academic English proficiency.

This review is reprinted from the *VATME/VATESOL Newsletter*, August 1988

Aboriginal Perspectives on Experience and Learning : the Role of Language in Aboriginal Education

Michael Christie
Deakin University Press 1985
$11.50, 111pp
Reviewed by Alex McKnight, Victoria College-Toorak Campus, Victoria

This book is part of the Deakin University course 'Sociocultural Aspects of Language in Education' and is a companion to books by Gunther Kress, Jim Martin, Cate Poynton and David Butt.

This book has nine chapters, two appendices, a reference list and further reading. Chapters one and two provide an introduction to the world view of Aboriginal people and the way this differs from that of Whites. In chapter three Christie turns to an examination of Aboriginal use of language and discusses ways in which the ways people use language are constrained by and reflect the social and cultural norms of the group. In the classroom the different modes of language use by Aborigines are frequently interpreted by White teachers as evidence of rudeness, insolence, laziness or worse. Christie also points out that the Aboriginal system of meanings is so different from the White system that translations are no more than crude approximations which carry none of the complex connotations of the Aboriginal word to Blacks. The Western system of maths is alien to the Aboriginal way of thinking as counting would rob objects of their spiritual significance, and most Aboriginal languages have words for only 'one', 'two', 'a few' and 'a mob'. Clearly, learning Western arithmetic for Aboriginal children involves learning a new way of viewing the world.

Attached to this chapter are two appendices. The first by Diana Eades points out that direct questioning is an important way of transferring information for Whites. For Blacks direct questions are often inappropriate, indirect questioning strategies are used much more and silence and delays are appropriate communication strategies. The second appendix by Anna Shnukal demonstrates that Torres Strait 'Broken English', despite its pejorative name, is a full and complex language in its own right.

In chapter four Christie examines learning styles. He claims that the role of language in Aboriginal learning is reduced and there is little need in Aboriginal society for formal education. In interviews with Aboriginal children, Christie found that school learning is viewed as a ritual initiation which requires conformity and passivity. For Aboriginal children successful achievement of initiation comes through attendance, the ritualised performance of stereotyped classroom activities and the progressive attainment of degrees of initiation as they progress through the grades.

In chapter five, the author examines the formal requirements of Western schooling and argues that we should stop trying to turn Black children into White children and develop their sense of

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autonomy. Chapter six considers communication in the classroom and is a recap of previous chapters, and Christie's suggestions to teachers would be familiar to most readers. In chapter seven, 'Planning a classroom program' the author outlines his ideas on principles for planning. Chapter eight looks at the teaching of reading and chapter nine by Brian Gray outlines approaches to language teaching which would be familiar to every primary teacher.

This book is rather disappointing as although it contains some interesting material it does not have any overall coherence. This may in part be due to the fact that it is the work of four separate authors and there is a good deal of repetition. There are typographical errors ('cogniton', 'resiliance'), details stated to appear in the further reading section actually appear in the reference section, and so on. There is a summary at the end of chapter two but not all others, and it seems rather strange to have two appendices attached to chapter three rather than at the end of the text.

More substantive reasons for my disappointment relate to more important concerns. For example, at various points the author states that his research was with remote groups, but asserts that the findings would apply to urban Aborigines. I feel uncomfortable about accepting such assertions, and found myself becoming more and more uncomfortable about sweeping generalisations about 'Whites' and 'Blacks'. Having taught ESL for many years I have become extremely wary about such generalisations and it is clear that we know very little about the sociolinguistic rules of interpersonal behaviour of other cultural groups, and we know even less about the variations of these rules within groups.

I am rather concerned by aspects of chapter four where Christie examines the role of language in learning. He asserts that in Aboriginal learning the role of language is reduced, but does not provide examples to prove this assertion, and I am left thinking about the work of sociolinguists such as Labov and wondering whether a 'White' interpretation misses a great deal of important detail. Christie then goes on to say that Aboriginal people think and perceive in a way which is not constrained by the serial and sequential nature of verbal learning. This section smacks of the behaviourist view of language learning and carries overtones for me of the 'deficit' model against which ESL teachers have fought for many years. Should I look at my Arabic-speaking friends in a new light as Christie seems to imply that such speakers think backwards compared to my mode of thinking? Is thinking so directly linked to language?

While I hesitate to recommend this book, it does have value as it points out that in classrooms with Aboriginal students there are differences of perspectives, expectations, understandings and interpretations; there are language differences and there are differences in learning styles. What the author does not point out is that this is the normal situation for many teachers in Australian society. Christie's suggestions to teachers are not new, but are worth repeating:

1. Be aware that communication difficulties are an inherent part of cross-cultural education.
2. Be conscious of the language used in the classroom.
3. Be aware of the complex nature of classroom processes.
4. Encourage the classroom use of the mother tongue, employ teachers from the community, employ teacher aides and encourage parental involvement and bilingual education.
5. Be explicit about classroom goals and provide clear feed-back.

Integrating English: Developing English Language and Literacy in the Multilingual Classroom

D Scott Enright and Mary Lou McCloskey Addison Wesley 1988 $36.95, 362pp
Reviewed by Lorna Hannan, Catholic Education Office of Victoria.

This is not a study but a handbook for teachers concerned about having their students learn English successfully in school in addition to their first language.

ELIC (Early Literacy Inservice Courses) and a great deal of the material currently available to teachers outline a whole language approach but are constantly criticised by teachers whose primary concern is for students who are coming to English mainly in the classroom. Their criticism focuses on the presumption made sometimes openly and sometimes by implication or omission, that second language students do not need anything very different from first language learners. They just perhaps need more of it or need to work harder at it. These views and the discussion that support them are inadequate not only because ESL students are in classrooms in significant numbers, but also because they depend on an inadequate understanding of language learning. This handbook is useful in that it follows the needs of second language learners in helpful detail, but it is not able to fill the need for more adequate analysis of language learning - one that would truly include first and second language learners.

Firstly the approach detailed in *Integrating English* contains much material that is familiar to teachers who have completed ELIC and associated readings - but it is different in that it brings the second language learner to the centre of the discussion too. Thus, content is looked at from the point of view of how to make room for students to bring their experience to the classroom. The discussion is not theoretical but a report of a particular teacher's work. The strategies which would allow a student to be "hooked into" the topic are sufficiently general for a teacher to be able to adapt them to a new situation. Diagrams showing a sequence of steps for teachers to follow make the description clearer. A table of objectives for a unit demonstrates the sorts of things a teacher might strive for.

Discussions of classroom organisation are similarly set out with a good mixture of general approach and detailed account. To my mind, the sections on real oral and written discourse are less satisfactory-particularly as they make claims which are difficult to substantiate and seem rather too general. However chapters 7 and 8 on "Building the Classroom Community" and "Developing ties with the School, Home and Community" contain some useful, practical yet principled ways to approach the wider issues that lie behind schooling from within the classroom.

The Integrated Thematic Units would add to a teacher's store of ideas or ways of thinking about material which has already been prepared.

This book provides a good read for the classroom teacher.

TESOL RESOURCES

1. *Teaching Strategies for a Whole School Approach to English as a Second Language* by Tony Ferguson with Yolette DeZilwa, Allan Dunbar, Peggy Regos and Denise Veltre, 1990, Ministry of Education, Victoria.

The authors of this booklet have gathered together from many previously published specialist sources a number of very practical ideas and suggestions for teaching and classroom management strategies for mainstream teachers who have ESL students in their classes.

2. *English as a Second Language in Early Childhood* and *Games and Activities that promote Language Learning* produced by Priscilla Clarke, 1988, Free Kindergarten Association Multicultural Resource Centre, Victoria.

These practical booklets written for kindergarten, preschool and childcare staff include material on strategies, understanding language development in children to the age of 5, books and story telling, music and games. Primary teachers have also found them useful.

3. *. . . and now English*, a video produced by Priscilla Clarke, 1987 FKA Multicultural Resource Centre, Victoria.

This video, filmed in homes, childcare centres and kindergartens, highlights strategies parents, childcare workers and teachers can use to support young children in maintaining and developing their first language and in learning English.

4. *Teaching Language in Context : the Topic Approach to ESL*, 1989 Ministry of Education Victoria. VHS, documentary, col., 30 mins $10

Here is a video showing the topic approach being used with newly arrived students at language centres. The video is a useful guide for all teachers involved with ESL students at different stages of language acquisition because it shows that complexity of the subject material can be overcome, if the particular stages of the approach are worked through systematically.

5. *LINGO* 1988. South Australian Film Corporation, VHS, documentary, col., 30 mins. $40 $6 freight. In this program, NESB students speak about themselves as learners. They talk about their language and learning needs. The accompanying teachers' notes provide a basis for discussion and suggestions for classroom activities. This video is suitable for in-service activities with teachers.

6. *About Teaching Languages: A professional development program for primary school teachers*, by Sarina Greco and Elina Raso, 1989. A project of the Catholic Education Office of Victoria, Melbourne, funded through the Australian Second Language Learning Program.

These inservice training materials include a unit on Sociolinguistic Profiling. They show how schools can build a systematic sociolinguistic data base which describes in usefully detailed ways the linguistic experience of all students and identifies their language needs as the starting point for detailed, specific language curriculum planning for mainstream classroom English, ESL, Languages Other than English. The unit, Planning for Language Learning, while explicitly concerned with LOTE, can readily be adapted to mainstreaming ESL and extended to postprimary settings.

7. *Language for Understanding Across the Curriculum (LUAC)* A research project has just been completed in Canberra which looks at the ways in which NESB students can be supported in mainstream schools.

The material is still in pilot form but any teachers interested in looking at the material: *Learning Together: Practical Strategies for Language Across the Curriculum in Science and Social Studies (7-10)* or the LUAC Inservice package should contact: Kath Ward, O'Connell Education Centre, Stuart St, Griffith, ACT., 2603 Ph: (062) 954 367

8. *No English*, Jennifer Mansfield & Sharon Pledge 1983
Ministry of Education, Victoria, $2.50 Available from SMECU.

This is a book designed to provide primary teachers with necessary ESL strategies to accommodate newly-arrived students in a mainstream classroom.

9. *Easy Strategies for Language Learning* Eastern Region teachers, 1989, Catholic Education Office, Sydney $4.00

Here is another book designed to provide primary teachers with the necessary ESL strategies to accommodate newly-arrived students in a mainstream classroom.

10.*English Language Development Across the Curriculum*, 1989, Department of Education, Qld., $120

This package contains teacher reference materials classroom materials (7-12) and a video to use with the inservice outline.

11.*Alternatives : Whole School approaches to teaching English as a second language*, 1988, Ministerial Advisory Committee on Multicultural & Migrant Education, Victoria VHS., documentary, col., 30 mins. $10

This video demonstrates the way in which team teaching can be used to ensure that ESL students develop language as well as subject based skills in their mainstream classes.
The video shows three case studies where ESL and mainstream teachers prepare and carry out the classes co-operatively to ensure language and content requirements are given equal consideration.

12.*Encouraging Successful Learning*, Language Strategies & Activities for all teachers of NESB students Years 7-12, 1989, Department of Education NSW., $65

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This package provides a detailed inservice kit which demonstrates the ways in which ESL students are disadvantaged in classes. Strategies are suggested by which language and subject skills can be developed concurrently in all major subject areas.

13.*Topics in ESL* 1984-7, Multicultural Education Centre, NSW. Dept. of Education, Sydney.

Some of these publications contain practical teaching strategies for accommodating ESL students in mainstream classes while others provide theoretical material on issues relevant to teachers of NESB students. For example

Topics in ESL 4
'Multicultural perspectives to poetry'. 'Pronunciation in English for Vietnamese speakers: some lesson approaches'.

Topics in ESL 5
'Communicative activities: what, why, how and where?' 'A case study of the process approach to writing in a Year 10 mixed ability class'. 'English for specific purposes: a language across the curriculum approach'.

Topics in ESL 7
'Developing contexts to support second language acquisition'. 'Content area instruction for the elementary ESL student'. 'Group work, interlanguage talk, and second language acquisition'. 'The role of native language instruction in bilingual education'.

14.*Curriculum Frameworks for Adult Second Language Learners,* a series edited by David Nunan & Jill Burton beginning in 1989, National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University, Sydney. Teachers of younger people may well find these frameworks useful as models of an approach to curriculum and syllabus planning to meet students' English language needs. The approach is used for English Language Teaching at school level in other countries.

To date, Frameworks are available for

- English for Professional Employment: Vocational Proficiency
- English in the Workplace
- General Communication: Survival Proficiency
- Linked Skills: Minimum Social Proficiency
- New Arrivals: Initial-Elementary Proficiency
- Reading and Writing: Minimum Social Proficiency
- Southeast Asian Learners: Initial Proficiency
- Study Skills Focus: Survival-Minimum Social Proficiency
- Young Fast Learners. Educational Focus: Survival Proficiency

Teachers wishing to consult them should also be able to find copies among the resources of local Adult Migrant English Centres.

15. *Australian Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines* by Angela Scarino, P. Vale, Penny Mackay & J. Clark, 1988 Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra.

These guidelines describe a learner-centred, activities-based curriculum framework for Languages Other Than English and ESL in Australian primary and postprimary schools. They were developed on a national basis with wide consultation by an Adelaide-based project team, one of whom is an ESL specialist. A wide range of inservice activities for LOTE and ESL have been conducted across Australia. In addition, ESL case studies exploring the applicability of the *ALL Guidelines* to TESL have been undertaken in three states, and an ESL Framework of Stages with accompanying Stage Descriptions following the *ALL* model is currently in draft stage. A number of ESL projects have been drawing on the *ALL* curriculum model; e.g., the South Australian ESL Curriculum Project has taken it as its starting point for ESL curriculum development from R-12.

The ALL Project has been working at national level for over four years. The team has been working on areas of refinement of the model for ESL, while providing consultancy and inservice where requested.

16. *Diversity*, a publication of the Catholic Education Office of Victoria on issues of language and culture. $12 for three issues per year.

This periodical addresses curriculum issues and policies, teachers' experiences, practical strategies, tactics and models at whole school program and class lesson level. It covers multicultural perspectives and the range of language teaching from mainstream multilingual classes, ESL, Languages Other Than English, mother tongue, second language and bilingual education and so on. Articles are contributed by and for primary and postprimary teachers and advisory teachers. The beguiling photographs of students by people like Ponch Hawkes make it beautiful as well as very useful.

17. *Explore Plants, Explore Soils* 1989 Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra, $17.95 each.

Two science units designed to help science teachers deal with the language demands of their subject and to provide ESL teachers with background information on these lower high school topics. Each set contains ten copies of the student book, worksheets, a cassette tape and a teacher's book.

18. *Starting Points: Strategies for Year 11 and 12 ESL Students,* by Kris Allen, 1989, Victorian Association for the Teaching of English, Carlton South. 73pp. $10 + $1.50 p&p. ($7.50 for VATE members, $6.50 each for class sets of 6 or more)

This booklet uses newspaper articles on a number of topical issues in a structured, integrated way to teach skills such as reading comprehension, note taking, summary, expository and argumentative writing. It is suitable for students working either in specialist ESL classes or mainstream English classes. Each worksheet is accompanied by a teacher's guide setting out the teaching focus, skills language items, teaching steps and suggestions for use.

19. *Explain Argue Discuss Writing for Exams and Essays.* by Mary Kalantzis and Peter Wignell, 1988 Common Ground Annandale, NSW, $11.95

This book provides some basic suggestions suitable for advanced ESL learners on how to write essays in different subject areas. The authors point out that different subjects organise information in different ways and the treatment of material will depend on the type of question being discussed. It also contains a number of student essays that are analysed as good and bad models.

If you know of any resources for either TESOL specialists or mainstream teachers of students who speak other languages, do send in the details. ***TESOL in Context*** would be pleased to list them in our Resources column. **(Cont.)**

Postal orders and Enquiries

1. Resource Services Branch
NSW Dept. of Education
Smalls Rd., Private Bag No. 3
Ryde NSW 2112
Ph: (02) 808 9474

2. Multicultural Education Centre
9-13 Young St.,
Sydney NSW 2000
Ph: (02) 240 8777

3. South Australian Film Corporation
Short Film Marketing Division
113 Tapleys Hill Road
Hendon S.A. 5014
Ph: (08) 45 2277

4. Minstry of Education, Victoria
Education Shop
P.O. Box 4367
Melbourne Victoria 3001
Ph: (03) 628 2124

5. Department of Education, Queensland
Production & Publishing Services,
Prudential Building, George St., Brisbane Qld. 4000
Ph: (07) 379 5588

6. Catholic Education Office, Sydney
Publication Sales
P.O. Box 217
Leichardt NSW 2040
Ph: (02) 569 6111

7. SMECU Clearing Centre,
270 Highett St., Richmond
Victoria 3121
Ph: (03) 429 6699

8. Curriculum Development Centre Publications and ALL materials.
Curriculum Corporation
St Nicholas Place
141 Rathdowne St.
Carlton, Victoria 3053
Ph: (03) 639 0699
(008) 337405

9. Common Ground Publishing
6A Nelson St.,
Annandale NSW 2038
Ph: (02) 519 1044

10. Free Kindergarten Association Multicultural Resource Centre
273 Church St.,
Richmond Victoria 3121
Ph: (03) 428 4471

11. *Diversity* and *About Teaching Languages*
c/- Catholic Education Office of Victoria
PO Box 146
East Melbourne Victoria 3002
Ph: (03) 665 0333

12. Victorian Association for the Teaching of English
PO Box 265
Carlton South Victoria 3053

13. National Centre for English Language Teaching & Research
Macquarie University
Sydney NSW 2109

14. Penny McKay
National Project Officer
Australian Language Levels Project
Languages & Multicultural Centre
Robson Rd.,
Hectorville SA 5073
Ph: (08) 337 6479
Fax: (08) 365 0571

TESOL Troubleshooter

When you are stuck with a TESOL problem and you are wondering what to do next, put it down on paper and send it to the TESOL Troubleshooter, c/- The Editor, 4 Ada St, West Preston 3072.

Our first mailbag has brought us these areas of concern. It is clear that many of the issues raised are common to both primary and postprimary education. If you think the strategies suggested could work in your situation - have a go. I am hoping to get feedback from anyone who tries these ideas or who has come up with other plans of action. If your concerns are not represented here - get on the other end of a pen !! Good luck for the second part of 1990.

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

I have taken up an appointment as the ESL teacher for the junior secondary section of a medium sized school. There are six class/subject teachers with whom I am working. The principal is basically supportive but doesn't know much about ESL and the staff seem to think ESL equals remedial education. Five of the class/subject teachers want me to withdraw the "problem/slow" children. In my last school, ESL was fully integrated and I was planning and team teaching with the rest of the staff. How do I go about changing attitudes and getting ESL happening in the classroom?

Frustrated, S.A.

Dear Frustrated,

I can truly sympathise with you. I started ESL life in the closet with the so-called "slow" or disruptive children.

A process to work through with the class/subject teacher may be:

1) diagnosis - before I can help non-English speaking background speakers I need to know what their language needs are. Error analysis may be a good technique to use. The booklet *Assessing Language Competence* available from the Catholic Education Office, Victoria, may be helpful here.
2) observation - second language learning is closely related to psychological and sociological factors (how I feel about myself and how I relate to others). Therefore I need to know how the students are interacting in class and in the playground.
3) planned language teaching - I need to develop a language learning activity that will enable me to monitor the students and assess how they go about the task (strategies and language).
4) modelled teaching - I can present a lesson based on the above information and suggest that the class/subject teacher help with the observation and monitoring of student performance.
5) I need to share observations with another professional (subject teacher) and plan the next step.

I always find it helpful to be able to present *clearly* to the subject teacher what I want to do and have a sound rationale for *why* I want to proceed in a particular fashion.

The principal is of paramount importance, since to achieve the above you will need planning time with subject teachers. Point out that it is of minor importance how students interact with you in the small group, they can't spend life in the closet - they have to be enabled to develop the skills to operate successfully in the mainstream.

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

ESL is working well in our school with joint planning and team teaching in cooperative groups happening in most classes. It's not perfect, but we are working together to improve the standard of ESL teaching and learning. My problem rests with two teachers. The first is one of the more experienced teachers in the school and the second is a graduate. They both plan with me, but neither of them really carries out what we have planned at the classroom level. The experienced teacher has "groups" but they are geographical not working groups and the students are streamed. The organisation in no way assists ESL students with activities. I am expected to oversee two of the groups and help them if they get stuck. The classroom is well organised but really quiet. Children are not encouraged to talk. The graduate has lots of ideas but no organisation - the room is full of noise but not necessarily constructive talk. It is almost impossible to engage students in ESL activities that will maximise language learning or to monitor language development. I end up trying to manage groups so that there is some semblance of order and always leave the class feeling frustrated.

Stumped, Vic.

Dear Stumped,

My first suggestion would be to look at the gains you have already made. You obviously can't ignore your problem areas, but maybe by analysing the successful strategies you have used with the other teachers, you can slowly move the others along the same path. From what you have said, it seems that the first teacher has established certain routines and organisational techniques that work well. This could be your starting point. Perhaps you could plan a language activity with this teacher and offer to give the lesson yourself. In other words, model how you think it could be handled. I find it helpful to ask if I might try out something new with the children. Develop some type of monitoring tool (checklist of possible functions/structures you would expect children to use in the task). Ask the class teacher's assistance in monitoring the language used. Make the planning and organisation tight, so that it cannot be seen as a "Mickey Mouse" exercise. It's unrealistic to assume that this teacher will change teaching methods overnight, but by regularly modelling alternatives, you may be pleasantly surprised to find these becoming incorporated into the class teacher's repertoire.

(Cont.)

The graduate obviously needs help with organisational skills. Rather than concentrate on language alone, I'd be inclined to incorporate organisational strategies into every activity planned. You may also need to point out why you would do something in a particular way. Good references for organising cooperative learning are *Adventures in Thinking* by Joan Dalton (1985, Nelson, Melbourne) and *Thinking It Through* by Alma Fleet and Lilian Martin (1984, Nelson, Melbourne). Working through the strategies suggested in these books may be a way forward for the less experienced teacher and could provide new insights for the other. Good luck! Please don't lose sight of the good work that is already taking place. Offering to take the class so that those teachers can be released to observe other teachers in the school is another handy strategy, if it is handled sensitively.

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

The language teaching in our school is well planned, creative and functional to a point. My problem is that most of the themes chosen reflect the teacher's belief that the students don't have any "experiences." What they really mean is that they don't have middle class Anglo-Australian experiences. How can I get teachers to select themes that are more relevant to our students and therefore enable students to bring their life experiences and knowledge of the home language to the learning situation? I'm really worried that our language problem is an assimilationist exercise.

Pro-diversity

Dear Pro-diversity,

Unfortunately your problem is a common one. Since we all work from our own experience there would seem to be two aspects you might consider tackling. Firstly, teachers need to be aware of the cultural life of the areas in which they teach. (I would imagine not all of the staff come from the local area.) Secondly, they need strategies they can build into their daily programs that enable the students to contribute their own life and language experiences. In order to be able to do this, you may have to arrange guest speakers who can talk at staff meetings. These people would preferably be from the local community. If there is a Council information booklet it could prove to be a valuable resource. It will probably list ministers, clubs, ethnic organisations and the like. Representatives of local sporting clubs (bocce and soccer particularly) are usually pleased to come and talk to children or teachers and many of the families may be involved with these activities on the weekend. The religious life of the families is often also important as a form of cultural expression and group identification. Many teachers with a Christian background are unaware of the diversity within the Christian tradition (various rites, calendars) and are sometimes uninformed about non-Christian traditions.

Once this information is available to teachers they are better able to incorporate activities that are designed to enable children to share their life experiences. In other words you need to know what to ask in order to elicit information - parents and students also need to feel confident that their traditions and cultural expressions will be respected before they may be willing to share them.

One word of caution - it can be even more distressing for students to have stereotypes of their cultural groups presented to the class. After all, if you don't even feel you belong to an ethnic group you are seen or identified as being part of, where do you belong? There is great diversity within as well as between all groups and this must be pointed out. Differing opinions with regard to lifestyle, religion, politics and almost everything else will be found in most ethnic family and friendship groups including the Anglo-Australian community. These should be presented as a dynamic rather than as indications of dissension (or worse still, ignored altogether). Students need to develop the confidence to choose for themselves what cultural norms they adopt. Work presently being undertaken at the Catholic Education Office, Victoria on developing sociolinguistic profiles (see our TESOL Resources column) of students will provide good guidelines for helping teachers with necessary data gathering.

A CHECKLIST FOR TEACHERS: How effective is your teaching?

The Australian Language Level Guidelines (see TESOL Resources) include eight **Principles of Teaching and Learning Language** and the theoretical bases for them. **Penny McKay** suggests they may be found useful by ESL and mainstream teachers teaching ESL through or alongside a content area as a basis for thinking, decision-making in and approaches to programming, syllabus development, method, resources, assessment and evaluation. We reprint the principles here along with implications for method in the form of a checklist for teachers to apply. The list is not complete: we leave room for teachers to add further implications.

Learners learn English as a second language through content best when:

1. they are treated as individuals with their own needs and interests

Do we

- cater for the whole learner (i.e. his/her intellectual, social, emotional and physical development) when determining both the content and processes of learning?
- appeal to learners' imagination and creativity (through simulation, games, stories, dramatic activities, visuals, etc)?
- create an atmosphere of trust to encourage learners to take risks in language use?
- provide opportunities for pairwork and group work to develop learners' social skills?
- employ a variety of teaching strategies to cater for learner differences?
-
-

2. they are provided with opportunities to participate in communicative and reflective use of English in and around the topic area being learnt, in a wide range of activities

Do we

- encourage and promote the active involvement of all learners?
- value and promote genuine communication, use open rather than closed questions, use an inquiry approach ...?
- provide a variety of activities using a range of appropriately graded spoken and written language commensurate with their level of language and subject proficiency (e.g. problem-solving activities, projects, excursions, group and pair work, interactive games, etc)?
- develop a range of activities (spoken and written) around the different types of discourse forms (genres) such as reports, narratives, summaries, notes, essays, etc called for in the subject area?
- provide opportunities for pair and group work with native speakers and non-native speakers in order to maximise opportunities for the negotiation of meaning?
- include questions wherever possible which are open-ended, and which allow learners to answer with information not already known by the teacher?
-
-

3. they are exposed to language which is comprehensible, and relevant to their own interests and frames of reference

Do we

- create an atmosphere where learners feel encouraged to participate and use English?
- use learners' experience and present understanding as a stimulus for learning and for language development?
- provide a variety of language stimuli from a range of sources (e.g. teacher talk, other classroom talk, audio and video recordings of talk, written/printed information, realia, etc)?
- monitor teacher talk (e.g. use explicit and easy-to-understand directions, paraphrase, repeat, emphasise, support with pictures and demonstrations, introduce new vocabulary gradually)?
- use clear, comprehensible texts and resources, supplement with pictures, realia, explanations, diagrams, charts?
-
-

4. they focus deliberately on various language forms, skills, strategies and aspects of knowledge in order to support the process of language acquisition and the learning of concepts

Do we

- teach vocabulary, structures, skills and strategies to support and encourage language in use in activities?
- target specific vocabulary, structures and concepts to incorporate into the lesson?
- teach text structure and connectives explicitly?
- use guided language and learning activities (e.g. sentence strips, paraphrasing and summarising, brainstorming for ideas, drafting, rewriting, semantic webbing, structured overview)?
- encourage learners to work together to discover new language patterns and conventions?
- encourage learners to develop and use communication strategies (e.g. asking for repetition, asking for clarification, looking puzzled, etc)?
- enlist the support of the ESL specialist?
-
-

5. they are provided with opportunities to focus on aspects of the culture of the community and the classroom

Do we

- have an awareness that some difficulties may have a cultural basis?
- become familiar with and discuss with learners explicitly similarities and differences between their own and the Australian cultural norms (e.g. expected behaviour in the classroom, different roles of teachers and learners, different notions about the world)?
-
-

6. they become aware of the role and nature of language and culture, in particular in relation to the language and culture of different subject areas

Do we

- create an atmosphere where cultural differences are valued and understood?
- elicit learners' experiences and views?
- encourage learners viewing the topic from different cultural viewpoints in order to build up learners' cultural sensitivity?
- become familiar with and make learners aware of different approaches to written text development (genres) in different subject areas, for different purposes and for different audiences?
- have an awareness and make learners aware that their culture's approaches to text structure (e.g. the pattern of logical development in argumentative essays) may differ from those expected in Australian schools?
-
-

7. they are provided with appropriate feedback about their progress

Do we

- promote success by making learners aware of the goals and objectives of their learning and the best means of achieving them?
- support further learning through feedback and encouraging learners to learn how to learn
- elicit feedback from students about the way they learn best, i.e. self-assessment, evaluation sheets, etc?
-
-

8. they are provided with opportunities to manage their own learning

Do we

- encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning?
- make learning goals and the best means of achieving them explicit?
- foster the development of cognitive processing skills, learning-how-to-learn skills, and social interaction skills?
-
-

Penny McKay has been a Project Officer with the Australian Language Levels (ALL) Project since 1986. This has involved a great deal of consultancy and in-service work in syllabus and curriculum development around Australia. Penny is an active member of the South Australian TESOL professional association, SATESOL.

ACTA

Literacy / TESOL / Literature

will be the theme of the next issue of

TESOL in CONTEXT

Send your contribution to the Editor, TESOL in Context
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Teaching English to Speakers
of Other Languages

TESOL
IN CONTEXT

Perspectives
PracTESOL
TESOL Talk
Resources & Reviews
Literacy/ESL/Literature

Journal of **ACTA** Australian Council of TESOL Associations

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TESOL in Context is a publication of the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) for teachers and schools with TESOL programs. It will appear twice per year.

TESOL in Context has six sections, which are:

1. *TESOL Perspectives*, which will contain two or three articles of 1000 - 2000 words on issues, curriculum strategies and policies;
2. *PracTESOL*, which will contain five or six articles of 2000 - 3000 words on good ideas and applications, classroom tactics, materials and units of work and so on;
3. *TESOL Talk*, where practising teachers talk about their work and experience;
4. *TESOL Reviewer*, reviews of books and materials;
5. *TESOL Resources*, which will contain notices and short, practical reviews and descriptions of human and material resources, with information on where to contact or obtain them;
6. *TESOL Troubleshooter*, a readers' query column, which will focus on practical problems and issues raised by readers.

Articles, notices or letters should be sent to
The Editor, ***TESOL in Context***
4 Ada Street, West Preston Victoria 3072.

Contributions should be typed and double-spaced on white A4 paper, with a margin of at least 4 cm on the left side. At least two copies should be submitted.

Contributors should attach a statement of up to 35 words containing their name/s, position and institutional affiliations, and relevant interests and experience.

All references to books, articles and other sources are to be identified at an appropriate point in the text by name of author, year of publication and pagination, e.g., (Cleland and Evans, 1988: 5). For references in appendix titled References, list all items cited in the text alphabetically by author, and for each author, by year of publication, e.g., Cleland, Bill & Evans, Ruth, 1987, *Learning English Through Topics About Asia Teacher's Book*, ESL Topic Books, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne.

Preference will be given to original articles relevant to the interface between the teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages and mainstream teaching as well as practical specialist TESOL material.

Reviews and materials for review should be sent to the Review Editor
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* Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Editorial

The policy of ***TESOL in Context*** is to find articles which speak to both TESOL-specialist and mainstream-generalist teachers of speakers of other languages and our first three issues, according to our contract with DEET, are to be particularly addressed to teachers in primary and secondary schools. Our contributors in this issue come from primary, secondary, English language centre, tertiary and adult classrooms.

So, the editorial group faces the fairly considerable challenge of ferreting out good, practical, preferably teacher-produced material and encouraging writers to develop it into high quality form for publication in a national journal (as opposed to a local more frequently published and more informal newsletter). We understand how teachers constantly develop materials and try out ideas and techniques, but too rarely have the time or the opportunity to write them up to share with colleagues outside their own staffrooms. We cannot give you the time, unfortunately, but we can give you a forum for this wider sharing and exchange. We stress that we are not looking for the style of the academic journal, but writing which communicates directly the way supportive colleagues commonly do in informal, staffroom discussions.

Some of our articles do fit the traditional academic journal mould because of their origins (eg assignment required for a course or presentation at a conference). While these have their rightful place in the reading of primary and secondary teachers, we want to encourage more practising-teacher writing which communicates by being clear, explicit and not constrained unnecessarily by formal academic conventions.

In this issue, most of our articles are related to the theme of literacy: reading, writing and literature. **TESOL Perspectives** begins with Marietta Elliott's article *What is this thing called "genre"?* which gives a succinct, reader-friendly outline of the theory and context of genre theory and systemic-functional linguistics in relation to classroom teaching practice and process approaches to teaching writing. Marietta's account provides background for the assumptions and discussion in a number of articles in this issue.

Lyn Turner's article, *Process vs Genre: a non-issue in the whole language classroom*, provides a case-study of the development of a young primary learner's development as a writer in English in such a classroom and shows how practice and theory can inform each other in the way Elliott suggests. In *KO'd by the Kogarah Kid, Anzac Day and Literary Traditions of Introspection*, Rosanna McEvedy's case-study of a recently arrived senior secondary learner provides interesting points of contrast with Turner's: in terms of sociolinguistic and pedagogical settings, the age of the learners and the very different English language learning tasks at these different age levels. It gives a practical example of the importance of careful assessment and placement of speakers of other languages in mainstream classes and specialist ESL/EFL classes. It provides strong evidence of the ongoing need for specialist ESL/EFL courses for students, as recognised in the *ALL ESL Framework of Stages (1991)*.

Susan Fullagar's article *Is reading in a second/foreign language a reading problem or a language problem?* reviews recent research and reflects on it in terms of her own wide teaching experience. She highlights significant ways in which second language learners differ from themselves and their peers reading in their mother tongue. The article also helps us put McEvedy's account of the case of Lau Ping into yet another perspective.

Language Awareness in L_1 and L_2 Literacy Learning by Bill Winser will be of particular interest to teachers who work with learners who are not literate in their first language when they begin learning English. He challenges the approach to teaching these learners which focuses heavily on oral skill development.

In **PracTESOL,** Susan A. Hayman shows us her classroom practice for *Producing and Using Bilingual Big Books with Junior Primary ESL and Mainstream Children.* Alison Standish presents a framework for planning specific English language acquisition outcomes with examples for Infants (Prep/Kindergarten) grade and for Year 5-6 learners in *Recycling Language: A Suggested Teaching Approach for ESL Students in Primary Mainstream Classes.*

For the particular interest of secondary teachers of ESL students who are not literate in their L_1 and who are in the beginning stage of literacy in English, we present Jennie Medley-Barrera's *Grass People: A Strategy for Teaching Teenage ESL Literacy Students.* This article exemplifies the Language Experience approach well-known to primary-trained teachers, but unfortunately less well-known among secondary-trained people.

ESL/EFL learners' success in school learning depends on reaching cognitive academic proficiency in English, that is, on understanding the formal, abstract, decontextualised English used in different ways in all subjects. Teaching for literacy development cannot be left to the English or ESL teacher, nor can it be restricted to the domains of personal or imaginative writing or literature (which has its own characteristic sets of registers and text-types) in the hope that skills will necessarily be transferred. *The Greenhouse Effect* by Sandra Bouwmans and Anne Motti details variations of a sound TESOL approach for establishing concepts in ways which do not depend on prior English language knowledge. This is done to develop students' English so that they can talk about the concepts in both informal English and formal academic terms as the basis for writing and reading about these and related concepts.

Cont. ▶

Suzanne Courtice gives teachers a very usable framework for getting ESL learners to write, read and discuss poetry in English in her article *An Approach to Poetry for ESL Learners.* Alan Williams' *Teaching Literature to ESL Students* outlines a rationale for literature teaching in TESOL and some ways of teaching stories and novels. *Strategies for Teaching Literature to ESL Students* presents some material based on Alan's approach for teaching the novel, *The Cay.*

Springboard to Literacy: The Use of Subtitled Video and the Genre of Traditional Stories by Janine Resch and Val Moss reports on classroom work with an advanced adult ESL class in reading and writing. Paul Learmonth works in a similar setting and reports in *PGR: Process Genre Recommended* on writing development work which uses a principled combination of process and genre approaches to teaching. Learmonth, like Elliott and Turner, exemplifies Kelly's new synthesis (1989:88), blending the best elements of process and genre approaches to create a situation where learners are fluent and confident in the writing process and also in command of the knowledge to produce acceptable, effective texts.

Tim Moore's paper *"My Essay is Consist of Many Mistake": NESB Academic Writing - Problems and Strategies* presents insights from work with tertiary learners who come to a Language and Learning Centre for help with written assignments required in the various courses they are doing.

In **TESOL Talk,** Nadia Casarotto talks to Chris Davison about her approach to teaching literature to her secondary ESL students.

TESOL Reviewer looks at multicultural sing-along big books, writing in ESL, reading, writing and assignment-writing textbooks, books on the teaching of reading and writing, multilingual word processing programs and a course in learner training.

TESOL Resources provides an annotated list of relevant practical publications, teaching materials and teacher development materials, books and journals on the teaching and learning of reading and writing in TESOL.

Our **TESOL Troubleshooter** offers suggestions in response to queries about some of the problems often faced by TESOL colleagues in mainstream school settings.

Our bonus article is Ruth Wajnryb's *An ABC of Course Design,* a handy checklist of ordered questions for teachers preparing courses.

The themes planned for the forthcoming three issues are

1. *Collaborative approaches to teaching and learning,*
2. *Assessment in TESOL* and
3. *Teaching and learning spoken English.*

Contributions on these themes in particular and on other relevant topics should be forwarded to the Editor as soon as possible.

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McKay, Penny in press 1992 *ESL Framework of Stages: An Approach to ESL Learning in Schools K-12* Australian Language Levels Guidelines, Curriculum Corporation Melbourne.

Glossary

AMEP *Adult Migrant English Program* is the title of the Commonwealth-funded English-language teaching program for adult immigrants in Australia.

ASLPR *Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating* scale which gives an indication of how well an ESL speaker can listen to, speak, read and write English and which is used to place learners in classes of similar levels of English in the Adult Migrant English Program and other adult settings. It is a 12-point scale between 0 (zero proficiency) and 5 (native-like proficiency). A score of level 1 is roughly minimal survival proficiency, 2 would be minimum social proficiency, 3 would be minimum vocational proficiency and 4 would be vocational proficiency. Level 3 would approximate the bare minimum proficiency needed to take part in other education and training programs.

EAP *English for Academic Purposes/Study Purposes/Further Study* are specific courses of TESOL for students intending to enter senior secondary, TAFE or tertiary courses in various fields. They focus on content and skills for cognitive academic language proficiency.

EFL Students *English as a Foreign Language Students* are overseas students in non-English speaking countries who are studying English. Some EFL students visit Australia to undertake courses in English.

ELICOS *English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students* is the term for short courses for overseas fee-paying students in Australia.

ESB *English-Speaking Background* is the term used in Australia to describe people and communities who speak English as their first language.

ESL Students *English as a Second Language Students* are very diverse in terms of their life, language, cultural and learning experience. Their needs are similarly diverse. Primary and secondary ESL students include:

children beginning school in Australia at the usual commencement age who have had little or no exposure to English, being recently arrived immigrants or Australian-born children whose home language may be a language other than English, in which they may have some literacy;

Cont. ▶

children beginning school in Australia at the usual commencement age who are acquiring English and another language simultaneously at home;

students starting school in Australia after the usual commencement age without any previous schooling in any country, with little or no English and little or no literacy in their first language, but possibly with work or military experience;

students starting school after the usual commencement age but with severely disrupted schooling;

students who arrive from overseas with about the equivalent amount of schooling in their first language as their peers have had in English. Some may have had some experience of learning English as a Foreign or Second Language overseas;

students (many of whom are Australian-born) who have had the major part of their schooling in Australia but who need assistance to meet the English language demands of mainstream classes;

students from non-English speaking backgrounds who have specific learning difficulties.

ESL Students vary in their proficiency in English. Five levels of proficiency in English for non-English speaking background students were identified by Campbell and McMeniman in their 1985 report *Bridging the Gap* for the Commonwealth Schools Commission:

Level 1 Minimal or no English as a Second Language proficiency

Level 2 Elementary ESL

Level 3 Intermediate ESL: the spoken English of these students gives an impression of problem-free fluency, but their reading proficiency is below their age level and their written work shows problems with task comprehension and written expression. Some secondary students may have stronger literacy skills than oral proficiency.

Level 4 Advanced ESL: students at this level can use English effectively in listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks within a limited range of topics and conceptual complexity, but not for all school tasks. They are intellectually able, but have not yet mastered the language of abstract thought and specific subjects.

Level 5 Very Advanced ESL: these students can use spoken and written English effectively for a very wide range of topics and conceptual complexity and can handle the subtleties of humour, innuendo, cultural references and the like in English.

ESP *English for Specific Purposes* are courses teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages for specific occupational or study purposes, such as English for Nurses or English for the Hotel Industry or English for Engineers.

First-Phase Learners, Second-Phase Learners, Third-Phase Learners. While there are as yet no standard definitions or uses of the terms, TESOL writers in some Australian education systems use them. *First-Phase learners* are beginners in English and include learners who have yet to reach fluency and confidence in basic, interpersonal, communicative uses of English. *Second-Phase learners* can at least communicate at a basic interpersonal level in English and can function to some limited degree in social and formal educational settings. Some writers distinguish only these two phases, others distinguish a *third phase* where learners are developing greater competence in spoken and written English for academic use in educational settings. However, the terms *second-* and *third-phase learners* may sometimes be defined to include NESB students who speak fluent conversational English much like their ESB peers in mainstream classes and whose linguistic and cultural competencies and identities may be unstable. They may have been born in Australia and had most or all of their schooling here and know little of their first language.

IELTS *International English Language Testing System.* A set of tests developed recently by Australia and the British Council and used for selection and placement of EFL/ESL students, especially overseas students, in tertiary education.

LOTE *Languages Other Than English,* a general term used in Australia partly because many languages are used daily for significant purposes in Australian communities and cannot be considered foreign. Some school systems use the term positively to describe children who come from homes where another language is spoken.

L$_1$ first language

L$_2$ second or subsequent language

Macro-skills or **the four macro-skills:** the useful term used by many Australian TESOL-trained teachers to refer to listening, speaking, reading and writing. The ordering of the skills is also significant in TESOL thinking.

NESB *Non-English Speaking Background* is used to describe people and communities whose first language is a language other than English and their children.

TEFL *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* is used to describe teaching English usually as a branch of study rather than a language of instruction to overseas learners in or from non-English speaking countries.

TESL *Teaching English as a Second Language* is the widely used term for teaching English to non-English speaking background immigrants and their children in Australia, especially at school level, to empower them to participate in Australian society and public life. ESL students here are mostly taught in English.

TESOL *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* covers both TESL and TEFL and the whole range of language and sociocultural contexts in which teaching takes place. It recognises that learners may speak more than one other language or that they may be acquiring English simultaneously with another language. It also recognises that the dominance of each language in the learner's repertoire may change over time.

TESOL PERSPECTIVES

What is this thing called genre?

Marietta Elliott provides a quick guide to genre, puts it into perspective with process approaches to teaching writing in TESOL and gives an example from her own teaching of a practical, principled combination of both.

The spread of genre theory has affected writing teachers in both first and second language settings in a variety of ways. Whilst some of us have embraced the theory with enthusiasm and applied it in our classrooms, others have been more sceptical. Many probably wonder what all the fuss is about *genre* and what is in it for us. No sooner has *process writing* been absorbed and applied, when along comes a new set of ideas according to which process writing is all wrong. Are we to jettison all we have so painstakingly learnt in order to change our teaching once again? How can we incorporate what is worthwhile about the new ideas without giving up effective practice?

These questions raise a deeper issue; the relationship between theory and practice. This relationship is made more complex by the fact that very few practitioners have the time or the inclination for theorising. On the other hand, practice needs to be soundly based in theory. Moreover, it is important that the relationship between theory and practice should not be top-down, but interactive. Practice should inform theory as much as theory informs practice. Ideas about language teaching which don't work in practice are of little use.

The other factor complicating the relationship is the social and political context. The genre movement has arisen in large part as a reaction against the process movement once certain inadequacies of the methodology became apparent. The major critique which the genre theorists have levelled at the process movement, not without justification, is that is has not been informed by any theory of how language works or of the various ways in which the social context affects linguistic outcomes. The genre movement is also critical of indirect pedagogies, that is, the belief that students will learn by being exposed to the right environment, that they go through a number of developmental stages and that the predominant role of the teacher should be as resource and facilitator. They believe process writing has given teachers permission to abdicate their responsibility to intervene in students' learning, in effect, to teach.

The two movements show the influence of different parent disciplines. This illustrates a fundamental problem with applying work done in different contexts to education. Whereas the process movement is influenced by psychological theories about learning, the genre movement is informed by linguistic theories about the nature of language and the sociolinguistic context. Each theory has something to say about language learning, but their different origins may signify that they should regarded as complementary rather than competing.

What is it, then, that the genre theorists want teachers to know and to teach about genre? The word *genre* is not a new concept. It was borrowed from the French word meaning *genus* or *type* and was used in literary theory to denote a type of literature, such as a novel, a sonnet, a short story and so on. The term has been taken up and used in a broader sense by certain linguists, who belong to a school called *systemic-functional* linguistics (Martin and Rothery, 1981 and 1986, Christie 1986, 1987, Martin, Christie and Rothery, 1987). This is a grammatical theory which is based on the concept that social function directly affects every aspect of language (Halliday, 1985). They also see interactions and their resulting discourse as highly ritualised. They have devoted their time to isolating and analysing the elements of different types of discourse, much as chemists have devoted their time to isolating and analysing chemical elements. A genre, therefore, is a text-type which is linked to a particular interaction. It can be spoken, written or even visual.

What is the importance of this work for the classroom teacher? Systemic-functional linguists have been particularly concerned with the genres required of school children. They have been described the social function and consequent linguistic features of these text types. In other words, the formula for these text types can be determined and should be taught to the students.

Let us take the example with which these linguists are most concerned: the expository essay. Structurally, this is a form of *exposition*. This means it should consist of a *Thesis*, which defines the *field* or topic of the discourse and states the major premise, an *Argument*, which explains the reasons for the premise and a *Conclusion* which is basically a restatement (Martin and Rothery, 1981, 1986). Other aspects which will affect the linguistic form of the text are the *tenor*, or who the audience will be, for example, whether it is an article or an exam paper, a lecture or a discussion over coffee. The last factor is the *mode*, whether the language is spoken or written, whether it is a televised address or a lecture. All these factors constrain the language which can be used.

Cont. ▶

The adherents of the genre movement believe that these constraints can and should be taught. They believe that writing will be demystified by explicit teaching of structures and forms of language, and that this makes it accessible to those who seemed to be failing to learn by what Bernstein (1977) has called *invisible* pedagogies; students whose home background had not prepared them for this way of learning. In this way, particularly by successfully mastering the formula of expository texts, students will be empowered in our community, as this form is so highly valued.

Are genre and process necessarily opposed? Is it necessary to abandon process writing to take up this new movement? I believe not. The main reason the two movements have been opposed is political. It is a competition for scarce resources and the hearts and minds of educators. The fervour with which opposing views are held is reminiscent of a religious movement rather than informed intellectual debate. It is possible to add to our repertoire the new knowledge which has been acquired without abandoning aspects of process writing methodology which we have found to be effective.

It is true that greater knowledge about the way in which language works, an awareness of the text types required and a less mysterious attitude regarding how these can be mastered will enhance our teaching of writing. There are also some cautions to be observed before we rush into teaching genres.

First, a distinction needs to be made between the knowledge a teacher has, which informs his or her practice and the way in which this knowledge is passed on to the students. I am not at all convinced that the best way is to teach it explicitly. Research has not demonstrated that explicit grammar teaching, whether it is sentence grammar, or, as in this case, text grammar, has resulted in better expression, spoken or written.

My second concern is that research about the text types themselves is not far enough advanced. The question of what the text types actually are and how we should distinguish them remains controversial. The danger is that each genre will be seen as a new form of knowledge. New genres are constantly being discovered, and students could be overwhelmed by many different writing formulae. This could have the opposite effect to that originally intended. It could make the task of learning to write unnecessarily complex. Moreover, we need to focus on similarities between text types rather than overemphasising the differences. We need therefore, to maintain a flexible attitude to genre rather than to see these formulae as prescriptive.

It is my conviction that we can add a consciousness of what language is and how it works and of the different text types required to the methodology of process writing. We do not have to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is by giving an example from my own teaching last Semester at the ELICOS Centre, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales.

I worked with a group of students on a publication containing accounts of their impressions of living and studying in Wagga Wagga. I wanted the students to write expository texts, but I wanted them to define their purpose and audience. I therefore began by discussing who we were as a group and what would be the purpose of our writing. We targeted the main audience as people in the students' country of origin who might be contemplating coming to Charles Sturt University. In other words, the writing was going to be in the form of a piece of advice.

At each stage of the process, we discussed one aspect of the text under construction. In the initial session, we discussed how the text would be organised. Whilst the overall structure was to be expository, it was also possible to embed a narrative illustrating the student's point of view. As some students chose to present their view by making a comparison between their country and Australia, we discussed different ways of organising these, whether by topic or by country. The writers were also reminded of the social context of the comparison, namely, that the purpose was to advise the prospective students about adjustments they needed to make in order to be successful.

In the later stages we discussed how the field, or topic of the text and the tenor, or the particular audience, affected the language we were using. For example, we were aware that teachers and members of the general community would also be reading our work. This affected not only the language but also the content. In the editing stages we drew attention to forms which were appropriate to written rather than spoken language.

I've tried to show, first of all, that an awareness of the different text types and the constraints on language can inform teaching without the students explicitly being given formulae. The language is discussed in the context of specific forms of writing. I also used models which the students analysed. The discussion of the language was linked to the social purpose which we ourselves had defined. Within this framework, the students had a great deal of choice about topic, structure and language. The constraints did not become prescriptive, but were once again linked to a common purpose. In the process the students were exposed to a number of different forms of expository text as well as writing their own. The outcome was a publication which provided a forum for their views.

Cont. ▶

Second, I've tried to show these ideas are tools which can enhance our work, but which should never be our master. We need to ask ourselves what this new concept has to offer and what adaptations are needed to incorporate it into our teaching. We need to approach new trends with the same mixture of openness and scepticism which I believe is essential to any form of intellectual endeavour, instead of embracing them first and only afterwards questioning their significance and usefulness.

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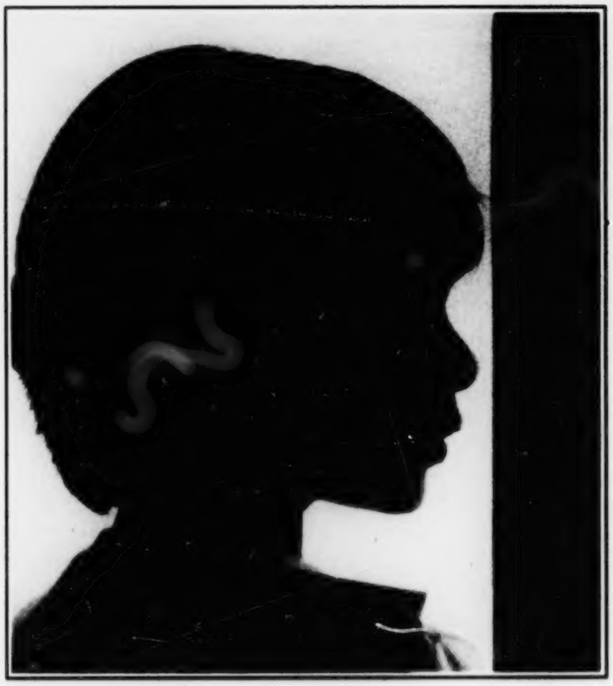


Marietta Elliott is currently lecturing in literacy and TESOL at Charles Sturt University, Riverina at Wagga Wagga, NSW. She has recently completed her Ph.D. featuring case studies of students learning to write in English as their second Language. She has thirty years of teaching experience in FL, ESL and mainstream English and Humanities at secondary and adult levels and is involved in writing and publishing.

Process vs Genre - non-issue in the whole-language classroom

Lyn Turner uses samples collected over two years of the writing of a single recently arrived ESL learner immersed in an English-speaking mainstream Prep/Year One classroom to show how he developed as a learner and a writer in English in the context of a whole-language approach to English teaching, an approach which draws on both process- and genre- based practices.

The process approach has evolved into the whole language philosophy which is the current paradigm influencing Melbourne primary schools and teacher training institutions, though the genre theorists appear to have ignored it. But when Hammond (1987) described two classrooms, one labeled process and the other genre, it was the genre classroom that more closely reflected my whole language classroom.

The importance of the link between language and the context in which it occurs is one of the most important principles of the genre-based approach, along with the provision of explicit input on the features of a variety of genres, and building up a language for talking about language.

The genre theorists claim that they have freed teachers to be able to teach without guilt, but whole language teachers and those who did not misunderstand the process approach to the teaching of writing and adopt a distorted version of it as an orthodoxy have always seen teaching as a vital part of their role. Whilst genre theory has enriched classrooms and helped teachers become more aware of the need to provide books and demonstrations that model a wide variety of genres, teachers in a whole-language classroom see their role as something broader than teaching: they see themselves as providers of an environment that supports learning.

It is this broader social context of the whole language classroom and its relationship to the written texts provided within it which is a key component in the writing development of the children in it.

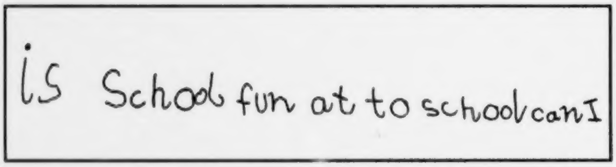
Radi came to Australia in December, 1987. He was five years old and spoke no English on arrival. His parents, however, had learned English at school and were reasonably fluent. The family used Bulgarian at home. Books and writing were part of his home culture. He commenced school in February, 1988. His first classroom appears to have been a formal, teacher directed environment. In May 1988 he transferred to our school and our prep/one classroom. He has had no specialist ESL instruction, however he has been immersed in a whole-language classroom where natural learning strategies and peer tutoring are encouraged. Most of his classmates speak English as a mother tongue. He is a bright child with an open, sociable personality.

When Radi first arrived in our classroom he was very shy and spent a lot of time watching and listening to others. He copied what others were doing as they went about their chosen activities and soon joined in as they used the Lego or worked on an applied number activity. It was not long before he was chatting away and becoming a popular member of the group. In this environment his spoken English developed quickly; but now to his writing.

When the other members of the class settled to work on the various stages of their writing Radi usually watched what the others were doing and taking his cue from this, he collected pencils and paper, set himself up at a table and watched. He soon discovered that it was fine to draw in writing time and he often drew. He was a little overwhelmed by the culture of our classroom. His first classroom had been very different.

Early in June he produced a little workbook he had brought from his other classroom. In this book he had copied a number of words, as directed by his teacher. He copied words from this book onto his paper. I acknowledged that he was writing and celebrated this with the other children. "Look, Radi can spell school the grown-up way", commented one child. Radi was proud of his efforts and for a number of weeks he copied out the same words.

SAMPLE 1: June 1988



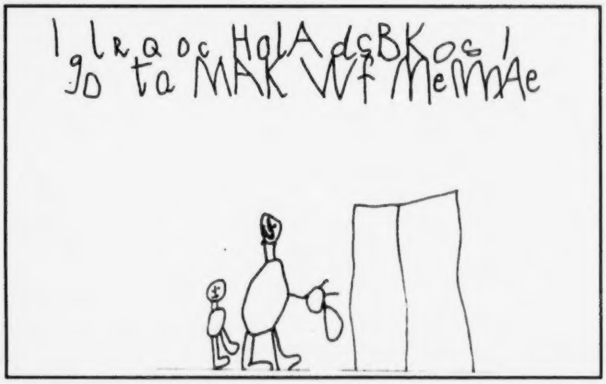
is School fun at to school can I

At the same time Radi was engaging with many demonstrations of the how of writing that showed him that reading and writing were worthwhile things to do. Reading to the children was a central part of my practice. Sharing books, commenting on content, style and particular features and building up a language for talking about the English language were a vital part of familiarising the children with the language of literature and non-fiction books and encouraging them to 'read like a writer' (Smith). Big books were used a lot to give the children intimacy with the print and a shared group focus for my mini-lessons that attempted to make particular features of the text salient. Writing in front of the children for real purposes and a variety of audiences and jointly constructing texts also provided many demonstrations. Sessions where the children shared their writing with the group allowed children to see the work of others and receive feedback while creating an environment that encouraged peer support.

Cont. ►

I was overjoyed when Radi created his first piece of original writing on 15 July. His invented spelling was evidence that he was making meaning of the demonstrations he was immersed in and reinforced my belief that given the opportunity to engage with meaningful demonstrations children make sense of their written world in a similar way to the way they make sense of speech.

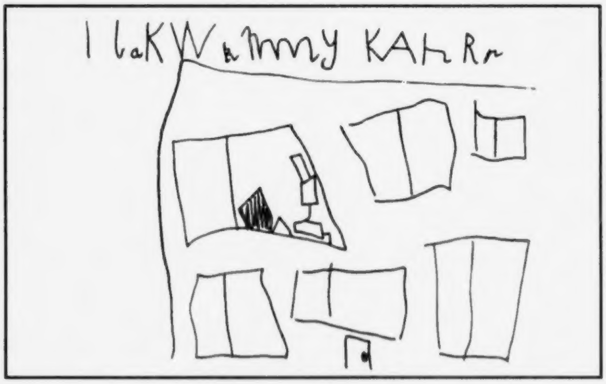
SAMPLE 2: 15 July 1988



I like holidays because I go to market with Mummy.

Radi now saw himself as a writer and he used his writing to communicate his feelings. On 19 July he expressed his feeling that it was alright to be Bulgarian in this classroom.

SAMPLE 3: 19 July 1988

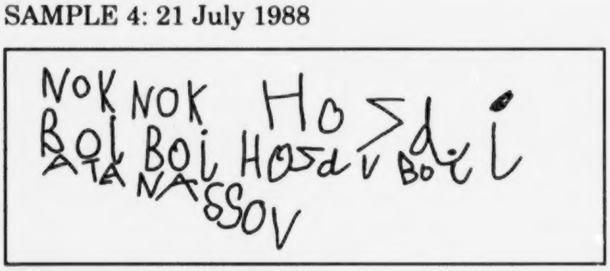

I laK W my KAhRr

I like my country.

At this time a knock knock joke craze had hit our room. One of the children wrote a *Knock Knock Joke Book* which he shared with the others.

Radi engaged with the children's demonstrations and wrote his own knock knock joke.

SAMPLE 4: 21 July 1988

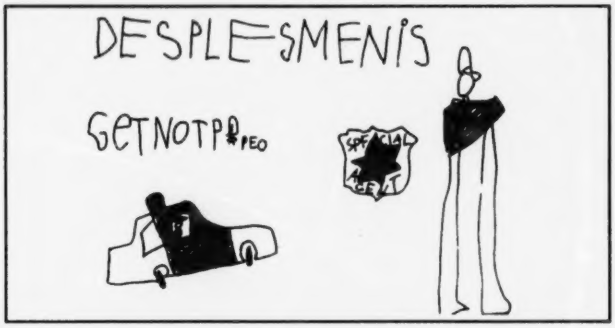

NOK NOK HoSdi
BoI BoI HOSdV BoI
ATANASSOV

Knock Knock. Who's there?
Boo. Boo Who? Boo

. . . .

In August he wrote one of many pieces that seemed to be exploring his wider social environment. His artwork was also developing and he was continuing to use it to convey meaning to support his text. His written text reflects his spoken interlanguage.

SAMPLE 5: 23 August 1988



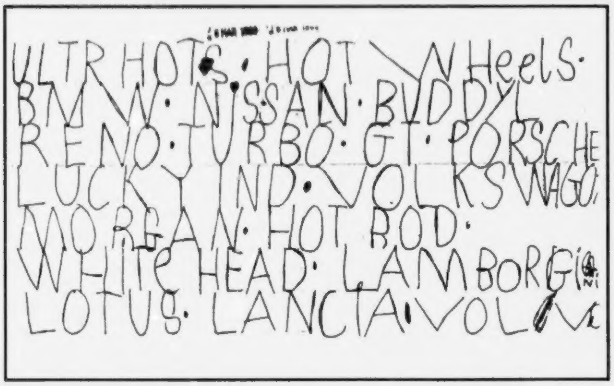
This policeman is get naughty people.

Our composite grades enabled our preps to remain in the same classroom the following year as grade one students. This meant that we could continue to build on shared knowledge: a vital ingredient available to caregivers as they provide the scaffolding to support the child's learning.

After one year in an English speaking environment Radi was communicatively competent in spoken English and had 'joined the literacy club' (Smith, 1988). He saw himself as a reader and a writer and used these skills to extend his knowledge and explore his world.

In March 1989 he wrote the following list of cars. I no longer needed to write a translation of his invented spelling to attach to the samples as they were filed in his writing profile.

SAMPLE 6: 6 March 1989



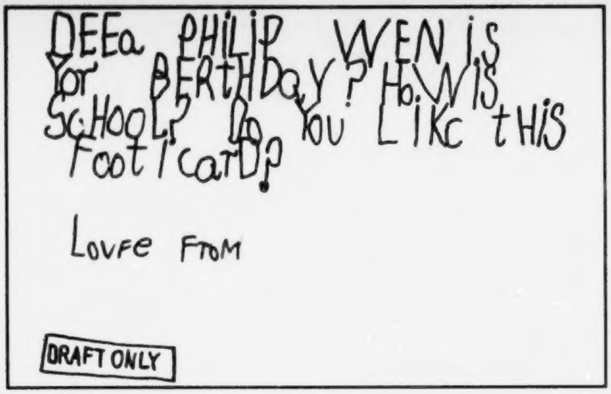
ULTR HOTS · HOT WHeelS ·
BMW · NISSAN · BUDDYL
RENO · TURBO · GT · PORSCHE
LUCKY IND · VOLKSWAGO
MORGAN · HOT ROD ·
WHITE HEAD · LAMBORGINI
LOTUS · LANCIA · VOLVO

Radi wrote the following letter to a grade 6 student who had worked with our grade. He enclosed a footy card and posted it in the internal school letterbox.

I had demonstrated the genre of letter writing for a number of purposes such as writing to the Tooth Fairy, Easter Bunny, parents, authors and so on. Janet and Allen Ahlberg's *The Jolly Postman* provided further demonstrations and a focus for discussion of a variety of letter genres.

Cont. ▶

SAMPLE 7: 3 May 1989



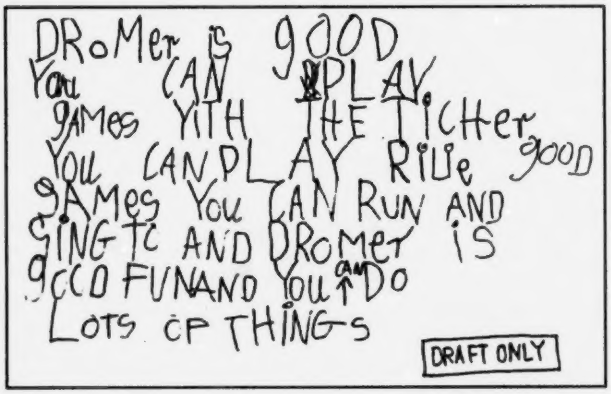
DEEa PHILIP WEN is Yor BERTHDaY? HoW IS SCHOOL? Do You LIKc tHIS Foot ! carD?

LovFe From

DRAFT ONLY

As there had been some discussion about the continuation of the drama program I asked the children to write their opinions about drama sessions. I explained the reason for requesting this information so that the audience was clear.

SAMPLE 8: 30 May 1989



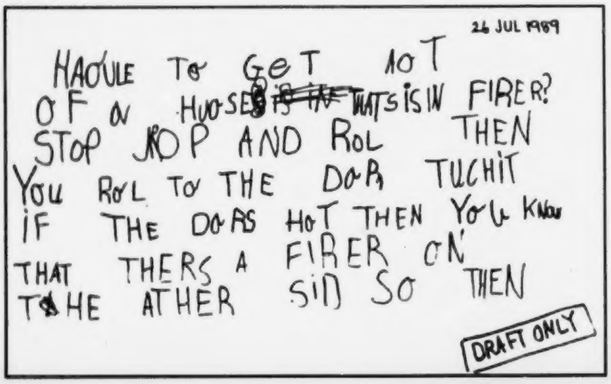
DRoMer is good You CAN PLAY games YITH tHE TiCHer YOU CANPLAY RiLe good games You CAN RUN AND SINGTC AND DRoMer IS gCCD FUNAND YOU can DO LOTS CP THINGS

DRAFT ONLY

Note the inserted *can*. This is evidence that he had either proofread his text or read it to someone else. Not only the process but the product was important.

About mid-July a group of children became very interested in fire-engines and fire. This self-initiated interest group formed a Fire Club. They set up a table where they displayed a number of artifacts, posters and books about many aspects of fire. Radi was part of this group who spent much of their time writing about fire. Radi formed a writing partnership with another boy and they produced a number of pieces.

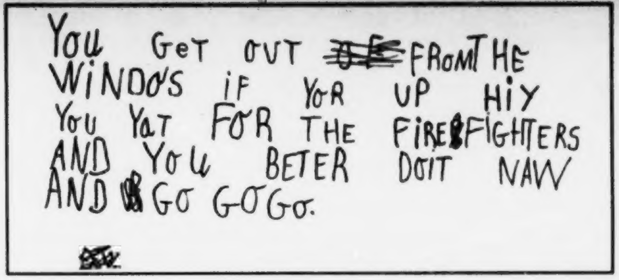
SAMPLE 9: 26 July 1989 (co-authored by Radi and Robbie)



26 JUL 1989

HAOULE TO GeT AOT OF A HUOSE ~~IS THE~~ THATS IS IN FIRER? STOP DROP AND RoL THEN YOU RoL TO THE DOR TUCHIT IF THE DOAS HoT THEN YOU KNOW THAT THERS A FIRER ON THE ATHER SID SO THEN

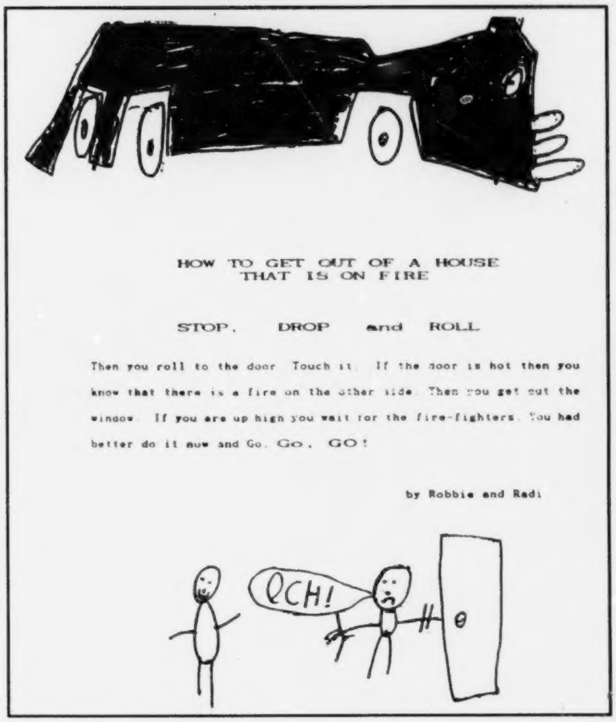
DRAFT ONLY



YOU GeT OUT ~~OF~~ FROM THE WINDOS IF YOR UP HIY YOU YAT FOR THE FIREFIGHTERS AND YOU BETER DOIT NAW AND GO GOGO.

As peer conferencing was encouraged, they read this piece to a number of children for feedback, before bringing it to me for a publishing conference. They wanted it typed like a poster to display on the wall. They also requested a number of copies to display in several places throughout the school as an information poster. I had not explicitly taught them about information posters, however, I had encouraged them to look for different ways of displaying information and publishing. Radi asked that I type *go, go, go*, like at the end of *The Hungry Giant* (Story Box) when he calls out: *ow, Ow, OW*. I see this as further evidence of the reading/writing connection, the importance of reading to children and encouraging them to read like a writer.

SAMPLE 10: The Poster



HOW TO GET OUT OF A HOUSE
THAT IS ON FIRE

STOP. DROP and ROLL

Then you roll to the door Touch it. If the door is hot then you know that there is a fire on the other side. Then you get out the window. If you are up hign you wait for the fire-fighters. You had better do it now and Go. Go. GO!

by Robbie and Radi

Cont. ►

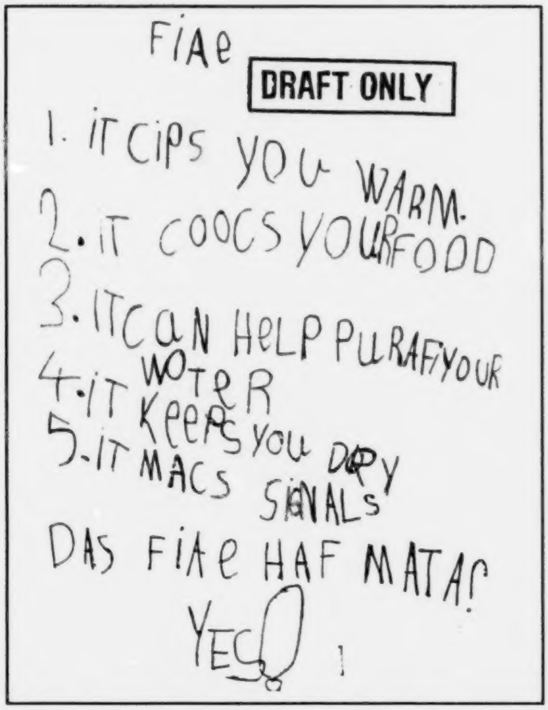
Some time later another poster appeared near the fire-table written by Radi's co-writer with some assistance from Radi.

SAMPLE 11: 15 September 1989

FIRE

1. It keeps you warm.
2. It cooks your food.
3. It can help purify your water.
4. It keeps you dry.
5. It makes signals.

Does fire have matter? Yes!



FIAe

DRAFT ONLY

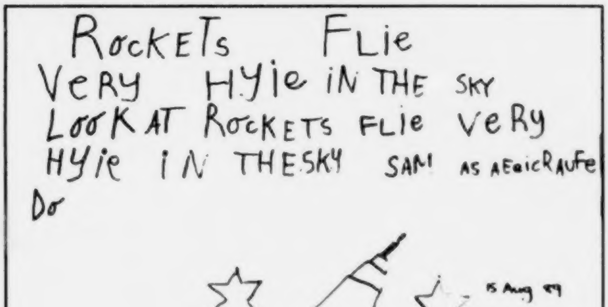
1. IT CiPS YOU WARM.
2. IT COOCS YOURFOOD
3. ITCAN HELP PURAFIYOUR WOTER
4. IT KeePS YOU DRY
5. IT MACS SIGNALS

DAS FIAe HAF MATAR

YES!

In August, again influenced by books we had been sharing, Radi was trying out rhyming text.

SAMPLE 12: 15 August 1989

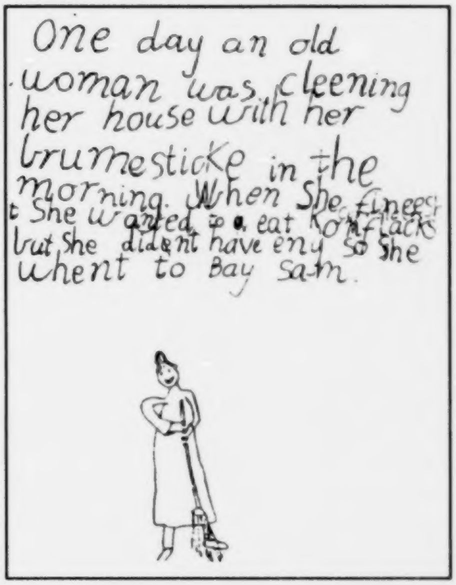


RockETs FLie
VeRy HYie iN THE SKY
LooK AT RockETS FLie VeRy
HYie iN THESKY SAM AS AEaicRAUFe
Do

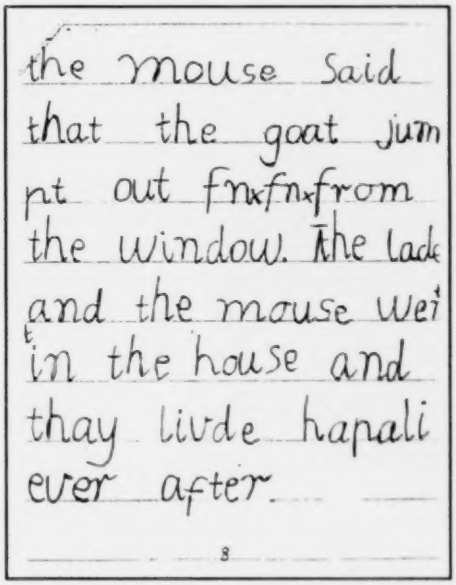
.... *high in the sky. Same as aircraft do.*

I collected the following draft and published book from Radi's grade 2 teacher. I had read and discussed *The Greedy Goat* with the class in November 1989. He had remembered it from the previous year and thought it was a good story. Many young writers use retelling as scaffolding to explore writing, though Radi did not use this approach as often as many do. I also find it interesting that this story was stored away in his linguistic data pool for so long before he used it.

SAMPLE 13: Commenced 16 May 1990



One day an old
woman was cleening
her house with her
brumesticke in the
morning. When She fineest
She wanted to eat Konflacks
but She didnt have eny so She
whent to Bay sam.



the mouse Said
that the goat jum
pt out ~~fn~~~~fn~~from
the window. The lade
and the mouse wei
in the house and
thay livde hapali
ever after.

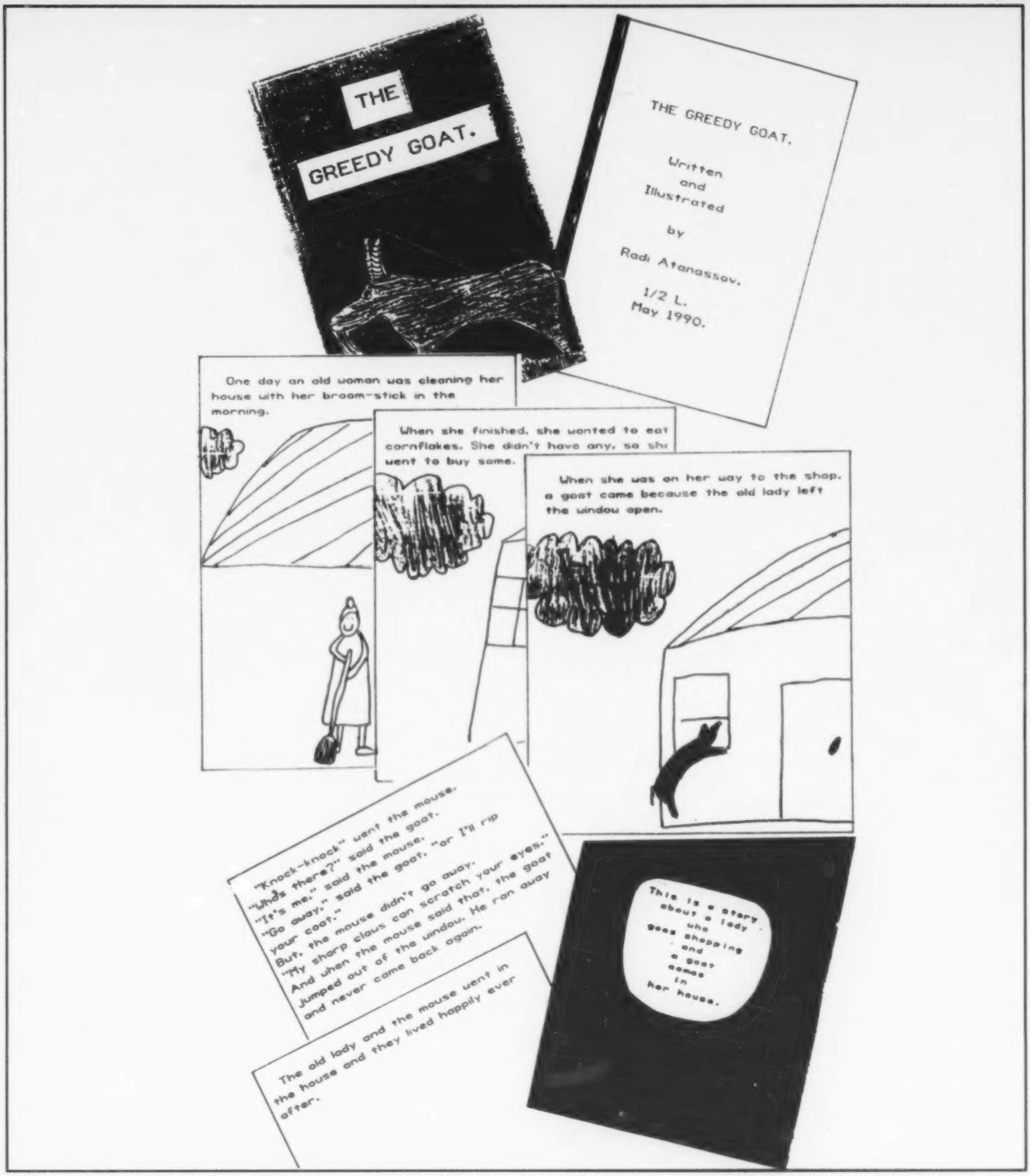
8

Two pages of the draft version.

68

Cont. ▶

SAMPLE 14: The Greedy Goat: A retelling **(Six pages are not included.)**



THE GREEDY GOAT.

THE GREEDY GOAT.

Written
and
Illustrated
by
Radi Atanassov.
1/2 L.
May 1990.

One day an old woman was cleaning her house with her broom-stick in the morning.

When she finished, she wanted to eat cornflakes. She didn't have any, so she went to buy some.

When she was on her way to the shop, a goat came because the old lady left the window open.

"Knock-knock" went the mouse.
"Who's there?" said the goat.
"It's me," said the mouse.
"Go away," said the goat, "or I'll rip your coat."
But, the mouse didn't go away.
"My sharp claws can scratch your eyes."
And when the mouse said that, the goat jumped out of the window. He ran away and never came back again.

The old lady and the mouse went in the house and they lived happily ever after.

This is a story
about a lady
who
goes shopping
and
a goat
comes
in
her house.

The experience of the process of writing has been very important but it is the satisfaction of publishing a real book that has inspired this seven year old to spend a great deal of time to produce a final product that conforms to the conventions of English syntax and spelling as well as many of the conventions of traditional tales and published books.

Radi has learnt much written and spoken English and has a good grasp of the pragmatics of the language. I cannot claim that our whole-language classroom was the only reason for his fine progress, however I do claim that it supported his development by encouraging the continuation of natural learning, providing demonstrations of both written and spoken English, and explicit teaching in meaningful contexts. Most importantly it invited him to "join the literacy club". Would it have been more appropriate to present him with explicit formulas for a variety of genres and make it compulsory to write to these formulas at set times? Should I have taught more "explicitly about language, as an enabling process for the learner"? (Christie, 1990: ix) Should I have insisted that he wrote in a non-fiction genre about the tadpoles that were a focus of our classroom at the time of the fire-table?

Cont. ►

Christie, Martin and Rothery, (1989), appear to be recommending such a strategy:

> . . . we do not advocate leaving the decisions about what to write or how to write as matters of choice for students in schools. (p55)

This reflects a learning theory that differs from mine. I have faith in children as learners and see my role as the provider of an enriched language environment, full of demonstrations of the how of writing and opportunities to write for real purposes in a setting where not only the teacher but other children provide the scaffolding to support learning.

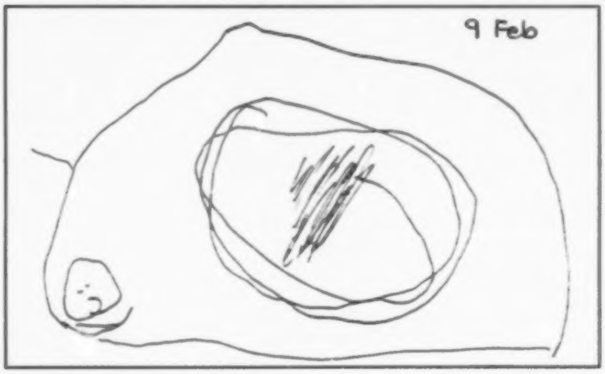
I agree with Christie (1990) when she states:

> The only children who really cope in classrooms where they are left to 'work it out for themselves' are those that are already advantaged, though even those will benefit from more direct intervention than often occurs. Those who suffer most from policies of being left to find their own way and their own models in language are the seriously disadvantaged: those from backgrounds where literacy is less highly visible and valued and/or those for whom English is a second language. (p18)

These children do need more support that the original process writing classrooms provided. I have argued this myself many times (Turner, 1985:9) But, do they need the type of explicit teaching some genre theorists are recommending? The following samples demonstrate how easy it is to distinguish the middle-class child who comes from a literature-rich home background from the child from a background where literacy experiences have been limited in both English and their mother tongue. A whole language classroom supports the development of both children as it did for Radi.

SAMPLES 15 and 16:

These two samples were collected from two prep children on entry to my class.



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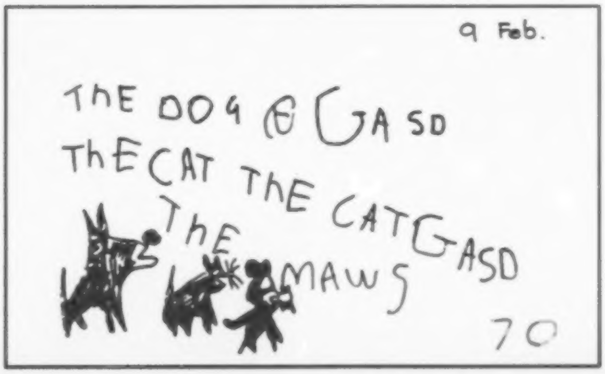

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The whole-language approach and the genre-based approach have much in common. They have both evolved from the growth/process approach. Both stress the central role of the teacher and the need for explicit teaching. The difference is the nature and form of this direct teaching and its role in the learning environment.

Are the genre theorists too preoccupied with linguistic forms rather than the whole classroom culture? Will teaching linguistic forms result in appropriate texts or is there more to it? Will the whole class be developmentally ready to engage with the explicit teaching at the same time?

Kelly expresses some of my concerns when he writes:

> The classroom is a more productive, happier place that it was before the adoption of a learner-centred form of pedagogy. It would be very sad to see the universal adoption of a style in which conformity to genre is considered to be more important than development or individual growth. In the long run it could erode all the gains which have been achieved and signal a return to more repressive and conformist attitudes in education.

The genre versus process polarisation is unnecessary and an obstacle to curriculum development. In the interests of our students we should have a broad view of social context, which includes linguistic context, and we should be exploring the potential of the best elements of both process and genre approaches to influence classroom practice. There is already more common ground than many like to admit. A whole language philosophy is providing me, as a primary teacher, with answers.

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KO'd By The Kogarah Kid, Anzac Day and Literary Traditions of Introspection

M. Rosanna McEvedy provides an anecdotal account of what happened when a student with a very low EFL proficiency got locked into a formal mainstream Year 11 English course which contained a significant literary criticism component. But this student has much in common with increasing numbers of recently arrived ESL/EFL students enrolling in the senior secondary years of Australian schools and the analysis of his needs presented here will be useful in informing mainstream teachers as well as specialists.

Lau Ping

Lau Ping was a Chinese Malay student who wanted to go to University of Western Australia to do Architecture. He enrolled in Year 11 English, Maths 1, Geography and Chemistry, which lead to Tertiary Entrance Examination, (TEE) and Applied Art and Media Studies, which are non-TEE subjects. Lau Ping was 19 years old at the beginning of Year 11 when his peers were 16 years old. Socially, he was less mature than a 13 - 14 year old Australian boy.

Lau Ping (not his real name) received private after-school tuition from me for up to four hours a week. His wealthy parents had sent Lau Ping to Western Australia because he had a poor scholastic record in Malaysia. They thought he would have a better chance in WA of becoming an architect, a doctor, a lawyer - any high-status job - and ignored the fact that these professions were far beyond his capabilities.

For various reasons, Lau Ping should never have been enrolled in Year 11. He had been enrolled in a commercially-operated senior secondary college which collapsed two weeks after his arrival in Perth. The upheaval affected his chances of receiving a proper Year 10 education because he spent the next two months wandering from school to school trying to see which one he liked. The school he chose promoted him socially out of the school into the wider community at the end of 1989 on the grounds of age, but the fact he was not even getting Fs probably influenced their actions. Removing him to a foreign country and a foreign education system, and then making him study in a foreign language increased the likelihood of failure. His parents told him to stay in Australia at all costs, find another school and complete his education. He was rescued when a mainstream school agreed to re-enrol him.

By the third week of February, Lau Ping had cracked under the pressure of a full Year 11 course and asked another student for help. This student passed him on to his own private tutor. Lau Ping was assessed by the private tutor as being around ASLPR 2- and he was passed on to me. At this time Lau Ping was offered the option of withdrawing from Year 11, repeating Year 10, or enrolling in an ELICOS course for a year and then re-applying to enter Year 11. His parents told him to stay in Year 11 as a place in Year 11 the following year could not be guaranteed.

When I first met him, Lau Ping had already done a few assignments for his mainstream teachers and had received marks of 5% - 10%, depending on the subject. When he sat the IELTS later in the year he got 3 on the academic writing test and 3 on the speaking test. In order to cope without worry I believe any ESL student doing Year 11 really needs 7.5 on the IELTS writing test and 6.5 -7 on the speaking test, so Lau Ping was well and truly unprepared in terms of command of English with regard to the course he was attempting.

Teaching ESL Retrospectively

Lau Ping had to follow the Year 11 curriculum set by the Secondary Education Authority, that is he had to study six subjects which had the correct balance between List A (humanities/social sciences) and List B (sciences/maths/accounting/computing) subjects. What happened in ESL tutorials with Lau Ping was dictated by his reactions to what had occurred in the classroom that day, and to what assignments had been set by the mainstream teachers for the next week.

Year 11 ESL was not offered at his school, and even if it had been he would not have passed it.

A graded ESL program that bridged the gap between his existing language proficiency levels and those demanded by his course should have been designed but the gap was too great to cover in four hours a week. Hence instruction-by-reaction became the order of the day.

Lau Ping's ESL program consisted of crisis-managing his most urgent worry, trying to make a bit of his Year 11 course comprehensible to him, and trying to teach vocabulary and syntax in context. Originally I was asked to help him with only the Literature component of his English course but the program expanded widely beyond that initial brief into actually teaching him Chemistry, Geography and Maths - not just the ESP of those subjects. The situation was governed by Lau Ping's desire to do TEE in Year 12.

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Lau Ping was locked into a course. He was locked into his parents' ambitions. He was set for failure. What follows is an account of how the Literature part of his English course caused him the greatest grief.

Lau Ping's Main Problems with Literary Criticism and English Language

Problem Areas

Lau Ping had serious problems with Year 11 English in terms of understanding:

- what was required of him in the Literary Criticism part of his English course,
- the cultural content of the texts,
- how other Literature could inform his life and how he could bring his life experiences to bear on the interpretation of authors' works, and
- that English structures not only express the content of non-English subjects but are also objects of study in themselves.

Teachers' Expectations of Year 11 English Students

Year 11 level English is a demanding, abstract subject which requires students to:

- be wordsmiths and practise the art of good writing,
- understand the technical jargon of English Language Studies and Literary Criticism,
- recognise and write different kinds of texts - satiric, narrative, imaginative/creative, reflective, opinionative, argumentative, emotive, persuasive and analytical/critical,
- respond to a written text - the nature of students' responses being elucidated by their own life experiences and ability to empathise,
- be culturally literate in terms of recognising the core values and attitudes of Australian culture and understanding how they are expressed in poetry, novels and drama, and also recognising allusions to the wider western culture,
- understand how theme, form and substance characterise genres, and
- appreciate how language is used - that is, analyse and understand how style is used by authors to reveal characters, communicate themes and express attitudes.

Cultural Literacy, Inferring, Interpreting and Responding to Texts

Lau Ping had difficulty with the cultural content of texts because he:

- could not see how autobiographies with their egocentric foci could have wider messages,
- could not see that personal maturity often led authors to reinterpret their childhood experiences and
- did not recognise culture-bound allusions, idioms, metaphors and references when they referred to Australian culture or to the wider Western culture. For example, comparing ritual playground violence with the watershed battle between Persians and Greeks in 480 BC led to a condensed geography and history lesson and an explanation of corporal punishment:

> The completed donger was, in effect, a black-jack. Every play-time, with me hovering cravenly on the outskirts, donger gangs would do battle against each other. The brawls looked like the battle of Thermopylae. Finally the teacher on play-ground duty would plunge into the melee and send everyone in possession of a donger up to the Deputy Headmaster to get six (James, 1981:32).

Lau Ping did not understand that the Clive James who lost his toys as a boy had lived to regret hurting his mother, that expiation of guilt is a valid component of autobiographies, and that Australians traditionally deal humorously with deep emotions in order to render them palatable:

> It was a big event when my mother bought me a little painted red cow. Presumably it was English. I took it to school and lost it. Next day she came with me to school, wanting to find out what had happened to it. My carelessness with everything she bought went on hurting her for years. She construed it, accurately, as ingratitude. From the sensitivity angle I was about as obtuse as a child can be. I was sensitive enough about myself, but that's a different thing (James, 1981: 15-16).

Lau Ping missed the wry mathematical reference. And I did not bother to tell him about hyperbole, meiosis and litotes.

Inferring and interpreting literary texts is a primary goal of Literary Criticism. Extracting various levels of meaning from texts and using personal experiences to further enhance the meaning is part of Australian literary tradition. Lau Ping was able to get the literal meanings out of a limited number of texts but found inferring and interpreting a rather alien experience.

Going beyond denotative meaning into simple connotative meanings was difficult because his cultural experiences called up different connotations. For example, a rose is a flower but it can also symbolise beauty and love in Western culture; what it symbolised to him may have been something very different. And so Lau Ping had great difficulty getting at connotative meanings in *Johnno*. For example, descriptions of domestic architecture and suburbia are used by David Malouf to describe his sense of self, family and social position in Brisbane. Lau Ping understood the reality of a Brisbane house-plan, when shown a photo of a traditional Queensland house, but answering the question below was an educationally alien experience:

> Draw a plan of your home. Locate your room on your plan. Describe the position of your room in the house in relation to your relationships with your family. Describe how you reach your room in terms of your own journey through life. If you do not want to discuss your real-life family or house, make them up.

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Turning the question around and basing it on traditional Malaysian domestic architecture was a fruitless exercise because the manner in which the text was being interpreted was the issue, not cultural differences in house design.

Lau Ping was further prevented from responding to texts in the ways his teachers expected him to because:

- his vocabulary was far too limited,
- for most of the year he could not write assessable strings of text,
- he came from a cultural tradition where interpretation was done for him,
- he felt awkward when asked to evaluate an author's work because written words were almost inviolable, and
- offering his own opinions seemed a pretty silly way of receiving an education.

Vocabulary Problems

In addition to being minimally culturally literate in Australian terms and not understanding technical jargon or abstract concepts in English, Lau Ping did not recognise many of the common words that occurred in his Literature texts (e.g. we solved the meaning of *wet* by putting his hand under a tap, and then distinguished *water* from *wet*). If he had had a base of, say, 5,000 common words he could have guessed the meaning of some sentences. As it was I think he probably had an active sight vocabulary of about 1,500 words. Just extracting the literal meaning out of texts proved extremely time-consuming.

Lau Ping had several other word-based problems:

- understanding gradations of meaning (e.g. *wet, moist, damp, humid*),
- matching synonyms (e.g. *arid* and *dry*),
- understanding that common words took on special meanings in some subjects (*humid, arid* and *semi-arid* climates in Geography),
- identifying a characteristic common to a group of words (e.g. a river, ocean, lake and pool are all *wet* and all *water*), and
- understanding imagery in passages such as the one below:

> There were also snakes. Walking to school barefoot along dirt paths lined with banksias and waratahs, I was always expecting to meet one of the snakes portrayed in the gaudily detailed charts which were hung up in the railway station and the post-office. Luckily the only snakes I ever encountered were harmless civilians: the filing clerks and secretaries of the serpentine world (James, 1981:21).

Not only was Lau Ping's basic bank of common words insufficient to handle the set texts but identifying what words he did know proved difficult because he could not hear many words when they were spoken or read them when they were written. These perception problems were related to problems with auditory discrimination and pronunciation. He could not pronounce certain phonemes (*th, sh*) and did not say final consonant clusters. *Perth, perve, purse, push, pushed, pushes* and *purses* were all said as {p} + {indeterminate vowel}. The pattern was repeated with most other English words (e.g. *find, finds, fine, fines*). Consequently, his reading suffered.

Style

The concept of a writer having a style in terms of his/her work containing characteristic peculiarities of expression eluded Lau Ping simply because he was a slow, word-based reader and could not read a sufficient number of different authors' texts in order to compare them. By Term 3, however, we did manage to look at some very short, simple extracts and analyse them mechanically in terms of:

- length of sentences (with a view to establishing some sort of relationship between elaborate and simple writing),
- common and "big" words,
- active and passive voice with an (unfulfilled) intention of seeing how objectivity is often expressed through the passive voice, and
- position of adjectival and adverbial phrases in sentences.

Unfortunately, he learned too little of what constitutes style, and how to analyse it, far too late because he had already had assignments on style from Term 1 which he had been unable to complete.

Teaching him to recognise examples of colloquial and formal language was an extremely lengthy process which I think was further complicated by the kinds of texts he was studying (*Johnno, The One Day of the Year, Unreliable Memoirs*) because these works were at the colloquial-informal end of the style continuum rather than the formal-objective. Getting him to look at his Geography and Chemistry texts as examples of formal objective writing confused matters as he did not see non-Literature texts as objects that could be analysed linguistically. He thought they just conveyed information and somehow were devoid of style.

Somewhere along the line he had learned about first, second and third person pronouns and when an extract contained *I, you* and *she, it, he* and *they* he was able to say whether the text was in first, second or third person. However, when faced with a piece of expository writing full of nouns from one of his Geography texts, he could not identify it as an example of third person writing. He did not understand the connection between nouns, pronouns and person. Instead, he relied on length of sentences, number of big words and occurrence of passives to distinguish formal expository writing, and I was content to leave it at that.

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Point of view is tied up with person. As a result of not seeing how person, pronouns and nouns tied together he could not see how an author's opinions could be inserted into a third-person narrative. The whole issue of author as first-person-participant, third-person-participant, third-person-observer and pseudo-first-person-participant was not resolved in his mind. He could not hear Remarque's opinions in *All Quiet on the Western Front* and thought he was extremely silly to have written a novel when all he had to do was write a letter to the paper if he wanted to express an anti-war opinion. He readily saw that Clive James was *I* in *Unreliable Memoirs* but he could not see David Malouf reflected in Dante in *Johnno*, even given the biographical notes on the author at the front of *Johnno*.

Clive James' use of intimate, colloquial, ironic, humorous language caused enormous problems especially when describing people, such as grandparents, who are given great respect in traditional Chinese and Malay society:

> You could track him down by listening for his constant, low-pitched, incoherent mumble. From his carpet slippers to his moustache he was twice as high as I could reach. The moustache was saffron with nicotine. Everywhere else he was either grey or tortoise-shell mottle. His teeth were both.
>
> I remember he bared them at me one Christmas dinner. It was because he was choking on a coin in a mouthful of plum pudding (James, 1981:13).

Alan Seymour's play *The One Day of the Year* was very difficult to understand because of the punctuation and orthographic conventions he uses to represent spoken colloquial dialogue. Apart from not coping very well with these, Lau Ping also had problems with contractions, non-standard expressions, vulgarities, redundancies, anaphoric reference, proverbs, slang and hackneyed expressions. In addition, he got lost among the cultural allusions and unfamiliar vocabulary:

> JAN: Mrs Cook . . . Hughie thought I was rude the other night. I was too, I'm sorry.
> MUM: (embarrassed) Hughie's dopey. It was all right. (WACKA comes down.) Hughie's friend reckons she liked you best sober.
> JAN: (laughs) I didn't say that, really. But this is your day, isn't it?
> MUM: Oh, don't start him on that, get enougha that from Alf.
> JAN: But isn't it? You were there. Do you remember it, Mr Dawson?
> WACKA: (nods shyly) Yeah.
> JAN: (prompting him) What do you remember?
> WACKA: Not much. It was a long while ago. (Silence again)
> JAN: Were you at the actual first landing? On this very day?
> WACKA: (nods) Yeah. Thought about it this morn'n. Before sunup. Just about the time we started up them rocks.
> MUM: What was y'thinkin' then, love?
> WACKA: 'Ow do I know, it was years ago.
> MUM: No, I mean th's morn'n.
> WACKA: Oh. (to Jan) I was standin' in that door lookin' at the sky, I was miles away, dreamin' about it. And I 'eard the Last Post. Dinkum, I though they was comin' for me.
> MUM: Hughie 'ad the service on 'is wiless.
> JAN: Hughie did? I though he hated Anzac Day.
> MUM: Hughie? Hughie hate -? Why should he?
> JAN: Well, all it stands for. (She looks at them as if they will understand. They don't.)
> (Act II, Scene 2, *The One Day of the Year*)

What would you teach Lau Ping in terms of colloquial language, spelling, formatting, syntax and cultural allusions in order to help him understand dialogue? What would he need to know in order to do the following assignment arising out of Alan Seymour's *The One Day of the Year?*

> Develop a dialogue which illustrates the theme of the generation gap. Your dialogue could be between teacher and student, parents and child. Your dialogue must be set out like a play with instructions/information/ stage directions in brackets where you feel it would be helpful to the reader and there must be some sort of climax/resolution to the discussion.

Style and the Reader's First Reaction to a Text

Atmosphere is the mood evoked by the author's style and how it is evoked is culture-bound. Writers evoke different atmospheres and reactions because they have a reason for doing this. Lau Ping could not be expected to recognise the stylistic ploys used to evoke tense, calm, melancholic, happy or fearful atmospheres. Consequently, he could not be expected to see that the author's purpose, style and genre intersect in the opening lines of a play or narrative. He was severely limited in the ways he could respond to a text. Doing an assignment which asked him to evaluate how Remarque evoked mood in the opening four pages of *All Quiet on the Western Front* while introducing characters, setting and situation at the same time caused panic - and hand-copying of large chunks of text and fixation on the final, total meaning of isolated words. It is a tribute to him that he actually continued to see me twice a week over four terms and was willing to tackle his homework every night even knowing he would not get a pass mark.

Jargon

I have mentioned that Lau Ping probably had a vocabulary of about 1,500 words when I first met him. Most of these words were Anglo-Saxon root-forms. He had major problems with the Latinate technical jargon of Chemistry, Geography and Maths texts. He needed practice in word-building.

Lau Ping did not understand the sub-concepts that are embedded in a macro-concept, even when dealing with a relatively concrete, easily illustrated macro-concept such at the water cycle. Trying to get him to give me the Malay or Chinese equivalents of precipitation, temperature, altitude, air pressure, condensation proved impossible. So initially he could not do any homework in any subject and could not decode questions. Because he had very limited English language proficiency and a small bank of concepts it took up to two hours to teach him the sub-concepts involved in a macro-concept and then decode a question for him - and this after a full day a school.

Cont. ▶

One of his ways of coping with jargon was to learn dictionary definitions for terms parrot-wise but he could not apply them in assignments because he did not understand the sub-concepts involved. Because he also had pronunciation and auditory discrimination problems, Lau Ping never quite memorised the definitions exactly... and so making sure he understood concepts was important.

A typical teaching session involved:

- teaching a macro-concept and its sub-concepts through diagrams, mime or physical/concrete experiences if possible,
- getting him to pronounce and write words as accurately as he was able,
- getting him to tell me what the words meant,
- decoding one of his homework questions and then
- helping him to map out an answer orally
- helping him to write one to five sentences.

Lau Ping often had three to five questions each night for each subject or a large assignment spread over three to five nights, and so the mental pressure he was under every day knowing he could not do 96% of his homework was tremendous. His mainstream teachers were rather supportive and marked him as high as they could on whatever he completed so that he had some marks to show in all subjects.

The problems Lau Ping experienced with the technical jargon of Chemistry, Geography and Maths were easier to handle than those posed by the technical jargon of Literary Criticism. For example: I could diagram *evaporation* but rendering *theme* as a diagram was beyond me. The greatest difficulty he had was understanding the term theme. Distinguishing theme from subject and plot proved impossible and translating theme as message only complicated things. Lau Ping understood a message involved a speaker/writer encoding a message for a listener/reader. The responsibility for comprehension of the message rested with the originator . . . Lau Ping did not understand that the receiver also had to make an effort to decode, infer and interpret and that understanding the theme, central idea or attitude presented in a work required cooperative effort from writer and reader.

Doing a Simple Assignment . . .

As part of his course Lau Ping had to read and respond to Clive James' *Unreliable Memoirs*, David Malouf's *Johnno*, Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and Alan Seymour's *The One Day of the Year*, when he could barely recite numbers, could not spell common words such as *Perth*, *school*, *Tuesday*, *clock*, *boy*, and *water*.

We looked at the assignment:

> Refer to *The One Day of the Year* and *All Quiet on the Western Front* and
>
> (a) write a defence of ANZAC Day school chapel services or
>
> (b) what does ANZAC Day mean to World War I veterans, World War II veterans, Vietnam War veterans and your own generation

and worked out what was expected of him. Lau Ping was not interested in the first topic, although it was easier, and so we looked at the second option. We revised ANZAC Day, its importance in Australian culture and attitudes towards war. We talked about different generations' experiences, the generation gap, gender and roles, social class, the importance of education and values in very simple terms and in ways that seemed to make sense to him. Lau Ping thought the generation gap was irrelevant to his life, and this was probably the case. He had problems dealing with the assignment because he could not see that different generations would view ANZAC Day differently, that Hughie, Dot, Alf and others were embodiments of certain Australian values and attitudes, and that a discussion of values held by different groups in a society could be related to Literature texts. He was highly perplexed as to why Vietnam veterans (once it was explained who they were) would be included in the topic when neither Seymour's play nor Remarque's novel referred to them. Lau Ping could not see that certain themes are timeless and can be re-interpreted by subsequent generations. But the greatest stumbling block with this assignment proved to be the fact that the teacher coupled a play with a book. Lau Ping believed that plays and books could not be discussed in the same assignment. Consequently, he had great difficulty synthesising any arguments.

The Kogarah Kid

Although Lau Ping was unable to interpret and respond to texts in a manner that satisfied his mainstream teachers he was willing to try until confronted with Clive James' *Unreliable Memoirs*. I think his greatest problem was cutting through the humour to cultural content and then seeing how irony, satire, age, memory and emigration distorted what Lau Ping understood to be the cultural realities. He found the humour un-funny - not surprising, since humour is cultural, and even some Australians find Clive James singularly un-funny. He found Clive James' boyhood, journey of homage to England and subsequent life unremarkable. The theme of personal growth was missed.

Much of Clive James' writing requires an intimate knowledge of Australian customs, architecture, social systems, flora and fauna. Some parts are easier to understand than others. The literal meanings in the passage below were easily understood:

> The houses were made of either weatherboard or fibro. Ours was weatherboard. Like all the others, it was surrounded by an area of land which could be distinguished from the bush only because of its even more lavish concentrations of colour. Nasturtiums and honeysuckle proliferated, their strident perfumes locked in perpetual contention. Hydrangeas grew in reefs, like coral in a sea of warm air (James, 1981:12).

Cont. ▶

A literal interpretation yielded information about Australian domestic architecture, bedding-plants and climate. Connotative meanings were also relatively easy to elucidate because they were sensual:

- rows of four-roomed fibro or weatherboard houses,
- flowering native trees and shrubs edging an unfenced riotous garden,
- beds of pink hydrangeas banked against house walls and fences, and
- coral in warm coastal waters.

Understanding Clive James' humour was more difficult, however, because of the metaphors, similes, exaggeration and culture-bound content:

> The funnel-web is a ping-pong ball in fox-fur. It inhabits a miniature missile silo in the ground, from which it emerges in a savage arc, ready to sink its mandibles into anything that breathes. The trap-door spider is really a funnel-web plus cunning, since it conceals the door of its silo with a tiny coal-hole door. Both kinds of spider can leap incredible distances. A wood-pile might contain hundreds of each kind. If you even suspected the presence of either species in your garden you were supposed to report immediately to the responsible authority. After the war an English immigrant lady became famous when she was discovered gaily swatting funnel-webs with a broom as they came flying at her in squadrons. Any one of them, if it had got close enough even to spit at her, would have put her in bed for a year (James, 1981:21-22).

Rough drawings of funnel-webs, trap-doors and their burrows were made. Then an explanation of appropriate responses to venomous spiders had to be given so that Lau Ping would get the punch-line in the last two sentences. Unfortunately, the humour got lost between understanding what a missile silo was and how it compared with a funnel-web burrow, the relationship between aeroplane squadrons and leaping spiders, and how hairy funnel-webs resembled fur-covered ping-pong balls.

Self-Expression versus Literary Criticism

It seems appropriate to note here that once Lau Ping was able to write coherent strings of words he preferred creating his own narratives to analysing others' works. He became less willing to do Literary Criticism and beavered away on his creative writing. Once he started writing relatively large texts he needed to have some control over narrative structure and so he grasped the structure of narrative texts firmly (Figure one) since he was now ready to. He wrote a few ego-centred adventures that were about ten sentences long and stuck to simple sentences. If he had been at this stage of development on entry to Year 11 he would have fared much better.

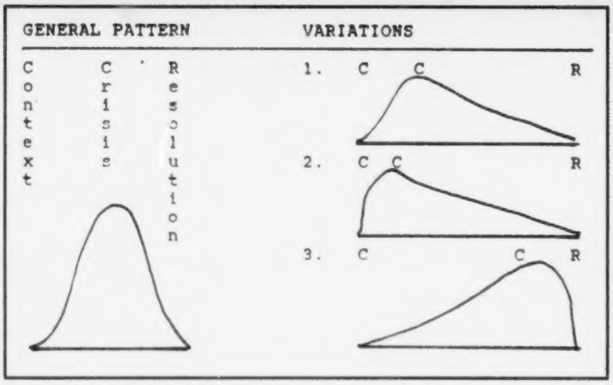

Figure One: Variations on basic narrative structure

At this point he realised he should have gone to ELICOS or repeated Year 10, but it was too late. Both of us accepted he would fail all his subjects and so we spent our time on what he wanted to do to improve his English.

Summary

In the best of all possible worlds Lau Ping should have done two years preparatory English for Speakers of Other Languages plus a Summer School English for Academic Purposes bridging course before attempting Year 11. Given parental pressures to continue in Year 11 and his own unrealistic views of his scholastic capabilities, he should have enrolled in only three TEE subjects plus Senior English and two other non-TEE subjects. He might then have achieved Ds in one or two subjects.

His ESL program was driven by his reactions to mainstream teachers' assignments and his most pressing worries. The Year 11 English program had little comprehensible input and making the content comprehensible led to only 5% - 10% of the English curriculum being covered.

Lau Ping certainly had reading and writing, speaking and listening problems, and over and above these he had articulatory and auditory discrimination difficulties. But I do not think Lau Ping's problems were all language-based. He had numeracy problems and his difficulties in reasoning, inferring and interpreting were not all due to cultural interference.

He did not have the usual level of personal maturity found in 19 -20 year old Malaysian-Chinese students. Because his parents were wealthy and he had been cosseted he lacked independence and life-experiences and was formally engaged to a girl in Malaysia at the end of Year 11. He had problems in communicating in Malay and Cantonese to Malay and Hong Kong students.

Cont. ▶

To a certain extent this article is a strong plea against admitting students to courses they cannot cope with, even when motivated by kindness. It is not a condemnation of Literature as a school subject nor is it an argument against using Literature to teach literacy. My objective was to bring home the point that if Literature is used to teach literacy then the texts used should contain comprehensible content and be culturally accessible, and students should have sufficient English language proficiency to handle the texts.

If I were asked to define Lau Ping's and my year together I would say he spent the year dog-paddling in a fast-flowing river.

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Is Reading in a Second/Foreign Language a Reading Problem or a Language Problem?

Susan Fullagar presents her views on the teaching of reading based on her experience in TESOL and LOTE teaching, from primary to tertiary and adult classes. She also presents the research hypotheses and findings from Charles Alderson (1984) in "Reading in a foreign language: a reading problem or a language problem?" and Joanne Devine (1987) in "The relationship between general language competence and second language reading proficiency: implications for teaching." She summarises the points still at issue and draws three conclusions.

The term *second language* includes foreign language and refers to any language other than the learner's native or first language.

> Very frequently, students reading in a foreign language read with less understanding than one might expect them to have, and read considerably slower than they reportedly read in their first language.
>
> Results of research also support the view that reading in a language that is not the learner's first language is a source of considerable difficulty.
>
> Alderson (1984:1)

Principles of Teaching Reading in a Second Language

1. Students need to know about the *contextual features of the English language.*

   These are present in real texts (as opposed to made-up texts written as a vehicle for a particular linguistic item, as are many texts in language course material).

   They are part of reading in a full context. This can not only help students learning to read in English, i.e. with the reading process, but also with the process of writing.

   Analytical work can focus from the bottom up - letters, words and their combinations into phrases, clauses and sentences, paragraphs and texts, - or the top down - from discourse level features to words either as components of a lexical set, or lexical cohesion. How the teacher does this will depend on the nature of the task, the text type (genre), the learner's level of proficiency in the target language, the outcomes for the learner, and the learner's previous knowledge of such features. This work should involve instruction.

2. *Students need to be assisted in their development of reading strategies so that they become proficient readers.*

   When children are learning to read in their first language they are learning about the syntax, vocabulary and phonology of their native language, and how these are used to express meaning; and they are being exposed to authentic texts from their print-filled environment. These two levels of work - developing reading-for-meaning strategies, and developing linguistic competence should be going on in parallel. Grading the task based on an authentic text and encouraging the learners to be analytical at both the sentence level and above assists them with both reading and writing.

3. *Students need to work from authentic texts.*

   The task can be graded in line with the student's reading ability. Texts can be simplified, but any simplification should involve grading the syntax and not removing material which would result in interference with the writer's contextual cues, the text's cohesion. These are important - they assist the reader to gain meaning from the text.

   For example, when the subjects in the study conducted by Ulijn (1978) focused on a map reading task, rather than on the specific syntactic items, they were able to complete the task successfully. I have found that this is so - students at beginner and elementary levels *are* able to undertake tasks described as being for higher levels: they focus on the task, they seek to process the information, but in doing so they necessarily grade their language syntactically.

   I have used successfully information gap tasks in this way; the material can be used at all levels (except absolute beginner) but the task, and the language elements that the students use to complete it, are simplified. This reflects the view that higher levels of proficiency are necessary for more difficult tasks but the training work, should and can, commence at beginner level.

4. *Students need instruction involving the aspects mentioned above, and also for discourse organisation in English.*

   There seem to be different conventions in different languages for organising a text and the strategies that learners develop are, to a certain extent, language specific because of the expectations about the organisation of a text in that language. English tends to organise its texts in an introduction, elaboration, conclusion linear-like progression. From my experience, many Greek-speaking students for example, have a tendency to use analogies as part of their development of argument in formal essays, and these, to an English speaker seem rather poetic and somewhat inappropriate. Chinese speakers often seem to present material in a way which seems circular and repetitive to an English speaker in its argument.

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To assist students with reading (and writing) an argument in English, the organisation needs to be considered when work is being done on the composing of a text. I have found that this assists students with information processing, it helps them to understand beyond the linguistic/ syntactic level.

5. *Students need to ask questions when they are reading for meaning.*

   The nature of the questions we ask depends on what is read and the reasons for reading it. We have these questions in mind before we read, that we know why we are reading, and what we want to find out before reading. Providing ESL/EFL learners with predictive tasks helps them to formulate such questions, and that varying the types of texts helps them to investigate a range of questions - just as the native reader does. I have carried out this sort of work with beginner level students: they have read and analysed a variety of text types and used this work as preparation for part of the writing process as they compose their own texts. These have included personal letters, journals, short reports, book/film/play reviews, advertisements, and recipe books *(process and genre).*

   This work is carried out with *all* students - it will assist good readers, when they have achieved a threshold level of linguistic competence, to transfer strategies which they have developed in their first language, while providing assistance for poor readers.

6. *Learners need to develop conceptual awareness.*

   Vocabulary development work will assist with this. Such work will not only include development and extension of lexical sets, but also focus on collocation, synonymy, hypernymy, hyponymy and antonymy, as these features of texts form much of the cohesion within them. This too will help not only with reading but also with writing.

7. *Native speakers read to learn after they have learnt to read and ESOL and LOTE teachers need to learn to assist their learners to do the same.*

   They too need to interact with a variety of text types, and with a number of texts dealing with the same topic.

8. *Students need to read for a variety of purposes.*

   We can read a menu to find something to eat, to discover whether there are any non-meat dishes, or to check the prices! And we read a map differently from a menu, a dictionary differently from a phone directory, a novel differently from a paper about reading. These different text types involve application of various conventions. ESL/ EFL readers need to develop their range of reading strategies and/or have the opportunity for transfer of those they have already developed in their first language so that they can also become proficient readers of, and in English.

9. ***Students need to develop information processing skills in parallel to learning the syntax of English.***

   At higher levels they need to be able to read inferentially as well as literally. Basic interpretative work can start with beginners. They can start to develop an awareness of the author's style, intention, attitude to the reader, register, and so on; they need to be able to read not only the lines but between and beyond the lines. This work continues as the student's language proficiency increases. And again this has an effect on their writing - they can be more critical of their own work and that of their peers.

10. *Students need more than cloze.*

    I have found that work on the reading process will assist learners with cloze passages but it should be remembered that cloze only focuses on the syntactic and lexical levels, and cannot be considered a valid way of assessing a learner's reading competence in English. Cloze passages are useful for teaching, revising and checking students' learning of syntactic and lexical items - I have, for example, used the first, intact paragraph of a text (sometimes as dictation) for predictive work about what the rest of the text will be about, the lexical sets, and the sorts of cohesive devices often used in that text type (for example, sequencers and time markers in a biography). Tasks involving a cloze passage can be reading related.

I have found from teaching both ESL and EFL to adult learners from beginner to advanced levels, that taking these areas into account helps them to read, read in the sense that a person reads his/ her own language: a variety of texts types for a variety of purposes, with predictive questions and an aim in mind. I think that it is my role as a teacher to assist learners to gain access to English for use as the native English speaker does. This involves my assisting them with acquisition of syntactic and other sentence level aspects to develop their linguistic competence in English. It also involves work on the process of reading. They need assistance with contextual issues which will help them to develop their ability to process information. Students at lower levels will be able to undertake basic reading tasks as part of their initial literacy in English. They will be able to transfer what they already know about reading in their first language to the second language. When they have a higher level of competence they can work on more and more complex reading tasks. This work goes hand in hand with their development in the other skill areas, commences at the beginner level and includes tasks aimed at helping learners to become proficient and critical readers of English.

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Review of Research

Reading in a second language: A reading problem?

Goodman (1984) has put forward the hypothesis that "the reading process will be much the same for all languages", a view which has come to be known as the "reading universals hypothesis".

> If the reading process is basically the same in all languages we would logically expect good native readers to be good second language readers. Furthermore we would expect good readers to maintain their advantage over poor readers in the second language.
>
> Clarke (1979)

Alderson (1984) proposes two related hypotheses, the second being a modification of the first.

Hypothesis 1 - *Poor reading in a foreign language is due to poor reading ability in the first language. Poor first language readers will read poorly in the first language and good first language readers will read well in the foreign language.*

Alderson (1984:4)

The research studies referred to in Alderson's chapter suggest a relationship between first and second language proficiency, and that there is therefore a relationship between reading proficiency in the first and second languages. But important questions remain. For example, what is the definition of bilingual? Does cloze, the measure used, test reading proficiency? What are these researchers' definitions of reading? What of the socio-psychological factors including attitudinal ones, such as the importance of the targeted language, the learner's attitude to that language and its speakers, and the role of the target language in the learner's community? These and other related issues are discussed in Schumann's "Social distance as a factor in second language acquisition" (1976).

Alderson concludes his overview of research relating to this first hypothesis

> Despite some evidence of transfer of reading ability from one language to another, from studies of bilinguals, only moderate to low correlations have so far been established between reading ability in the first language and reading ability in the foreign language when the same individuals are studied in both languages.
>
> Alderson (1984:19-20)

Hypothesis 1a - *Poor reading in a foreign language is due to incorrect strategies for reading that foreign language, strategies which differ from strategies for reading the native language*

Alderson (1984:4)

Considerable prominence has been given in research studies, and those mentioned in Alderson (1984), in relation to Hypothesis 1, to the syntactic level. Other evidence indicates that this may not be the most significant level at issue (see below: textual clues). If this is so, it contradicts Alderson's Hypothesis 1a.

Reading in a second language: A language problem?

Devine's chapter (1987) focuses on reading in a second/foreign language as a language problem and, in dealing with this issue while presenting an overview of relevant research, she has formulated three questions. Two of these (numbers 1 and 3) echo considerations discussed by Alderson (1984) (in his Hypotheses 2 & 2a).

Question 1. *Does limited proficiency in a foreign language restrict general reading ability in that language?*

Devine (1987:263)

Hypothesis 2: *Poor reading in a foreign language is due to inadequate knowledge of the target language*

Alderson (1984:4)

It would seem from the research studies that subjects were not transferring the strategies and skills which they had developed for reading in the first language.

These studies suggest however, that reading in a second language is more than just a language problem especially when the definition of reading refers to *process* rather than *product*.

Question 2: *Does limited proficiency in a foreign language restrict readers from using specific types of textual information, such as discourse constraints, when reading that language?*

Devine (1987:263)

Hypothesis 2a (part 1): *Poor foreign language reading is due to reading strategies in the first language not being employed in the foreign language due to inadequate knowledge of the foreign language*

Alderson (1984:4)

Findings from the research studies quoted seem to indicate that limited proficiency in a second language does restrict readers from using particular types of textual information, constraints at the discourse level - including word meanings, lexical cohesion in texts, and meaning relationships between sentences - when reading in that language. There seems, from these studies, to be no transfer of reading strategies developed by good readers for reading in the first language, to reading in a second language.

Question 3: *Is there a threshold of competence which readers must reach before they can read successfully in the second language? How can that threshold if it exists be defined?*

Devine (1987:263)

Hypothesis 2a (part 2): *Good first readers will read well in the foreign language once they have a threshold of foreign language ability*

Alderson (1984:4)

Cont. ►

The research studies referred to in Alderson (1984) and in Devine (1987) found considerable support for the notion that some sort of threshold of language competence has to be achieved before abilities in first language reading can be transferred to reading in the second language.

More work has to be done, however, to establish what the nature of this threshold is - what it consists of (syntactic, semantic, conceptual or discourse level aspects) - and whether it varies from learner to learner, and for different reading tasks.

Alderson (1984:21) also indicated the importance of studies focusing on subjects with established similar levels of first language reading competence, and on the reading process rather than a reading product (comprehension) level - data has consisted mostly of scores from multiple choice discrete point grammar tests and clozes - and he suggests that the studies have been quantitative rather than qualitative in relation to "good" and "poor" readers, "high" and "low" levels of competence, and the nature of different types of information relating to topics and texts.

Consideration of whether texts focus on *language processing difficulties*, or *information processing difficulties* (Grade 1986) are also important.

Conclusions from the readings

Alderson (1984:26) draws together a number of generalised points

(a) that we can assume some sort of threshold;

(b) that a good first language reader will transfer his/her skills and become a good second language reader after achieving this threshold;

(c) that the poor first language reader will need some reading instruction to enable him/her to make progress in reading in the second language.

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Language Awareness in L1 and L2 Literacy Learning

Bill Winser's article will be of particular interest to teachers who work with learners who are not literate in their first language when they begin learning English. He challenges an approach to teaching these learners which focuses mainly on aural-oral skill development.

Literacy Learning Involves Language Development

To become literate in either one's first or second language it is both necessary and functional to become aware of language itself, and how language works to make meaning in the written mode. This means that language teachers have to make language accessible to learners. It also means that they have to help learners to know about language in the functional sense, to make it visible instead of opaque. This applies to both L1 and L2 learners, although the force of this argument is often more apparent to L2 teachers.

Some L2 Learning Situations

Before attempting to elaborate on and justify this position, let us first examine some typical learning situations where these principles might apply. The first is that of first phase learners, or beginners, all of whom have low oracy in L2 but vary in their educational experience and in their literacy in L1. With these learners there is often a concern to concentrate on the development of their spoken English, particularly if they are part of the group with low L1 literacy. This latter group are seen to be particularly difficult to help with L2 literacy, since they have no literacy skills to transfer to the target language. It may be, however, that a concern to spend most time on developing oracy with this group could be counter-productive to the development of literacy.

A second situation where literacy is an issue may be seen with third phase or advanced learners. Here we might also think of the so-called mainstreamed NESB learners. They are likely to have a fuller educational background than the first group mentioned, but may have moved away from the culture of their first language. In this case oral language development in English is often not foregrounded but the concern is for strengthening and broadening their literacy skills. To develop their literacy we are often concerned with giving them access to some of the key genres and discourses of our culture so as to enable them to participate more fully in it. The question arises here about the role of language learning - whether oral or written - in their learning. Because their spoken English is relatively advanced, does this mean that they are automatically able to acquire advanced literacy skills? This is by no means a foregone conclusion.

Ideas about Literacy

It is important at this point to ask what we mean by literacy itself. To some this is a matter of the so-called basic skills, learned separately from instances where they can be applied, sometimes in withdrawal classes with the assumption that the learners can easily transfer the skills to new situations. The alternative to this unsatisfactory model is to think of literacy in cultural and linguistic terms. Literacy from this point of view involves the development of the ability to use new meanings and functions of language, meanings which have been encoded in discourse in different ways from spoken language. Educational linguistics attempts to deal with these issues, and provides us with a better, principled basis for understanding literacy than the behaviourist notions that often underlie the basic skills position. (see Halliday, 1990).

Sociocultural studies of language use at home in various communities have shown how different is the use of language amongst some groups in comparison with its institutional use in schools. Brice-Heath's well known study (1983) of three American communities highlights the differences, with a much more instrumentalist use of language in one of the communities that contrasts with the more abstract, decontextualised language of the classroom. This difference in language use illustrates the dimensions of the task we face when helping students develop literacy, particularly those with little L1 literacy. The nature of this difference can be made a little clearer if first we examine the metalinguistic development of children, before and during the early years at school.

Metalinguistic Development and Literacy

To begin with spoken language, there are studies that explore young children's ability to treat language as an object in a reflective way. Eve Clark begins her paper with the claim: "Children begin to reflect on certain properties of language at an early age" (1978, 17), pointing out that two year olds can report their awareness of their own ability to vary their speech according to audience. She argues that their awareness is the product of their reflective abilities, which begin to appear at about age two and include spontaneous self-corrections of speech, queries about the choice of language and comments on others, play with language units, judgments about structure and function and questions about language generally.

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We are familiar with the common tendency for young children to play and practise with language, where repetitions and variations of phonology are carried out, as well as puns, rhymes and riddles, and figurative language. Studies indicate that children find it difficult to segment words from the flow of speech at first, then begin to identify units using semantic cues, and only later are able to segment into phrases or topics (Papandropolou and Sinclair, 1974; Clay, 1972). They often confuse words with noun phrases and generally focus on functional attributes of discourse as part of their concept of what is spoken. It is only under the influence of school that the concept changes. School age children tend to transform these notions into a unit of written language. One important study (Francis, 1973) of children's awareness of language units found that spelling, reading and writing dominated school children's perceptions of language in their first few years of schooling; she concluded that the new experience of dealing with the written language seemed to be the main reason for this perception, as though the children never seemed to think of words as part of spoken language. Hall (1976) followed this up with a study of segmentation of speech and writing, finding that children performed better with written than oral language, and that both abilities correlated with time spent at school.

What is emerging here is support for the view that the significant gain that is made during the early school years is the ability to control, in a deliberate fashion, the processing of language, both written and oral. It is very likely that there is a capacity for children (and adults) to become more aware of language as an object and not only a means of communication, and that part of this awareness is an ability to reflect on language in its own right and to manipulate it in some sort of intentional and certainly deliberate fashion. This may be summed up as an ability to control language processing, perhaps arising from the earliest tendency to play spontaneously with and reflect on language.

It is likely that interaction with written language, which stands relatively free of immediate context, is an important stimulus to learners' metalinguistic functioning. Their earliest experience with language is likely to be in a dialogue where the interactants and the immediate context provide considerable support to the communicative act. When the child first encounters print there is also likely to be support from the context, so that the print on food containers and restaurant logos can be interpreted from situational cues with minimal input from the graphic display. However the more rigorous demands made by the school are likely to bring about further development of metalinguistic abilities. As Yaden and Templeton point out (1986), interaction with writing may contribute to the development of metalinguistic awareness because it freezes aspects of speech in the new visual medium, thus creating a second order of symbolism which the reader must learn to separate from the first order symbolism of speech. Because print is static it now becomes more likely that the child will be able to reflect consciously on it.

There are therefore indications that there is some relationship between metalinguistic awareness and ability and learning to read, although it seems that much of the evidence is correlational. Valtin (1984) does not accept the prerequisite hypothesis, and argues that phonemic awareness in particular is likely to be the result of learning to read. Goodman (1981) cautions that we must be careful not to draw instructional conclusions too readily from this correlationally based research, pointing out that the relationship is bound to be unclear; she also argues that it is possible that print awareness, understandings about writing and talking about written language all interact with metalinguistic awareness and then with reading development. The most likely position to take here is to set up the relationship as a reciprocal or interactive one (Ehri's 'facilitator': 1979, 64). We conclude, with Ehri, that awareness is likely to interact with reading achievement, as a consequence of what occurs during learning to read and as a further stimulus to progress. Thus knowledge about print and the language of instruction result from and contribute to reading development.

The main issues that emerge appear to be:

1. Metalinguistic behaviour occurs as part of language development in the preschool and early school years.
2. It consists in an ability to focus deliberately between metalinguistic functioning and reading skill; this is probably a reciprocal one.
3. It is likely that interaction with written language is an important milestone in metalinguistic development.

Language Awareness and a Language Model

From this evidence we can see that an awareness of language in its own right, not merely as an invisible vehicle for communication, is functional for language development in the early years. Not only is language awareness part of L_1 literacy development, but it will be a factor in anyone's learning to be literate, whether in L_1 or L_2. If it is important to be able to attend to language itself as part of language development, and if this awareness is associated with the written mode, and effective use of this mode, then we need access to a model of functional language that explains and describes exactly *how* language functions and is structured, according to the context. It is not enough to know that language use differs from one community or group to another, and that this use differs from the functions of language at school. We need a model of functional language that we can use as teachers as a basis for helping our students.

Before we discuss such a language model, we must clarify one major issue about literacy learning. It is not uncommon for language teachers to act on the belief that skilled literacy automatically, but in some unspecified way, follows from the development of fluent oral skill. Perhaps this is a remnant of the audio-lingual method, but in any case there is a well known argument that literacy learning is dependent on prior oral language development, and that L_1 literacy should take place before L_2 literacy - and of course these two principles

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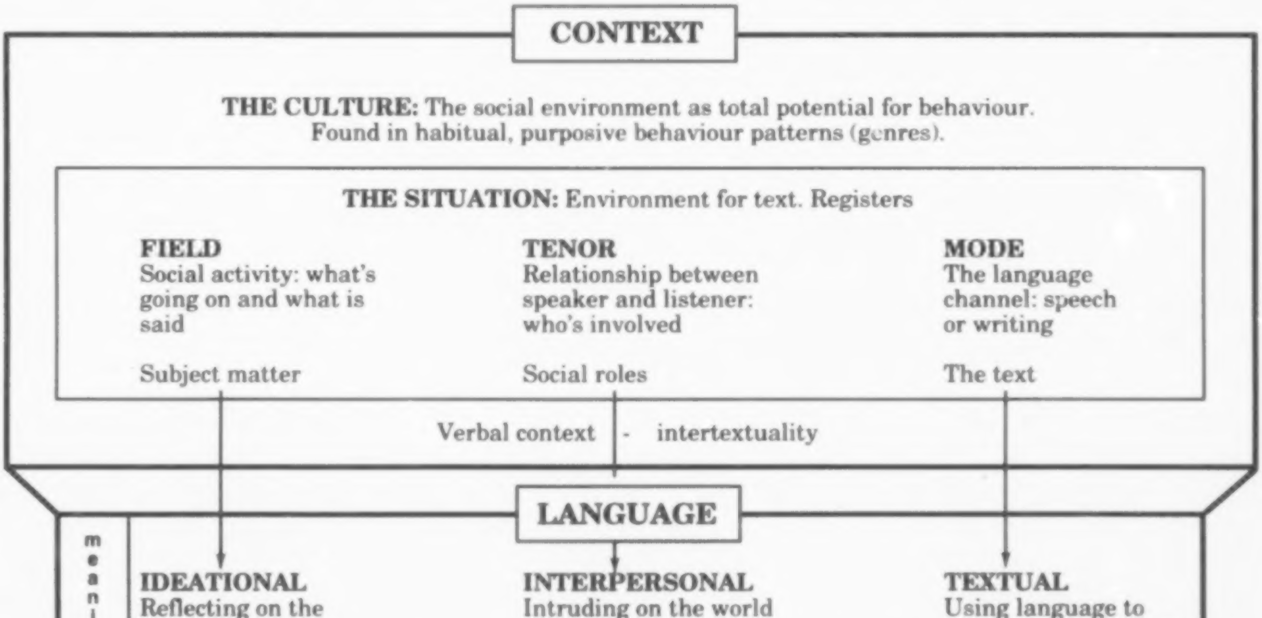
often apply. Certainly the L1 illiterate is often the most difficult to teach literacy in L2. The communicative approach supports this position very strongly by stressing learning through activity and through direct experience, while downplaying language form and the use of more reflective activities and abstract contexts removed from direct experience in learning. The problem here is that the very language that is needed for literacy development is not closely related to direct experience and is not closely related to context. Written language tends to be decontextualised and less closely related to direct experience. There is therefore a critical need to focus on these different ways of making meaning in language. By doing so we will not only assist literacy learning but also this knowledge about language will feed back into the learner's general language development. We therefore argue that there is a need to develop learning activities for literacy that take these linguistic characteristics into account. (cf Turner's article in this issue.)

How important is language awareness to such a fundamental literacy task as reading? In most psycholinguistically based models of reading it is held that readers must apply their knowledge of their culture and of the language system to the text being read so as to construct meaning. L2 learners must therefore be equipped with that aspect of language knowledge that will enable them to cope with the written mode. However, many of the context bound, activity-based experiences that we plan for these learners do not enable them to focus on the written mode. If we expect L2 learners to develop this language knowledge from the typical contexts linked to their direct experience and where the context provides full support to their use of language then we will find that they will have difficulty in reading all but the most limited, speech-like and context dependent written texts. They will be constantly hindered in their development because they will not be able to use the typically written structures and that underlie the written mode of language.

What is meant by such a written mode of language? To understand the notion of a decontextualised, more reflective and abstract mode of language that is characteristic of writing and therefore required in literacy we must be able to use a model of language that can describe these properties for us. Here we can only sketch out the register-based, functional model of Halliday and his colleagues (Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Martin, 1985). It is relevant to language teachers because it has a very clear description of how language is related to its context, as the following model shows. (see also Elliott's summary in this issue.)


CONTEXT
THE CULTURE: The social environment as total potential for behaviour.
Found in habitual, purposive behaviour patterns (genres).
THE SITUATION: Environment for text. Registers
FIELD
Social activity: what's going on and what is said
Subject matter
TENOR
Relationship between speaker and listener: who's involved
Social roles
MODE
The language channel: speech or writing
The text
Verbal context - intertextuality
LANGUAGE
meaning
wording
sounding
IDEATIONAL
Reflecting on the world and making sense of it
INTERPERSONAL
Intruding on the world and getting things done, through people
TEXTUAL
Using language to construct texts that are functional in context
Transitivity: the participants, the processes and the circumstances. interdependency, logical relations
Mood (speech acts) Modality and modulation and polarity to express attitude.
Theme and the information structure, Cohesion (reference, lexical, conjunction, ellipsis, substitution)
Phonology and graphology
TEXT
A stretch of language with semantic unity and functional in its context.
Characteristics: Genre: expresses purpose through organisation.
Register: specific language features.

Cont. ▶

To begin at the top of the model, we see that the culture is the major source of meanings and of ways of behaving which, linguistically, are to be seen in the genres we use. The genres - like stories, instructions, descriptions and expositions - are ways of doing things to achieve our goals and are typically staged to do so. When we think of the more specific background for all the texts we produce, we think of the registers that relate to these more specific situations we find ourselves in, such as meeting a friend in the shop, doing the washing up or giving a lesson at school. Registers are semantically oriented and are composed of variables that are characteristic of situations within our culture - the field, the tenor and the mode of the situation where language is being used. Related to these register variables are the metafuntions of language, the main ways we can make meaning according to our purposes. The experiential function tends to link with field, to express our concerns about what is going on in the world and how we represent this to ourselves. In the grammar, these meanings come out as processes and participants (verbs and nouns). The interpersonal function relates to tenor and is concerned with speakers and listeners, the people involved in our world, into which we intrude ourselves. Here the language involved is that of mood, the speech acts of stating, commanding and asking for what we want. Finally the textual function ties up with mode and is concerned with the construction of the texts we produce, using the channel of speech or writing and thematic topics and cohesive devices like reference and conjunction as a means of gluing our texts together.

The Mode Aspect of Register and Literacy

What is immediately important for literacy is the mode dimension, where we are concerned with making the texts and interpreting them. We can understand this aspect better by considering mode in terms of a distance scale: the distance of the language from the action (and also from the listener). As the speaker (or writer) moves away from the action where language is involved, and therefore from the immediate context, the language changes. At an intermediate point on the scale we might recount the action, shortly after the event, while at the far end of the scale is reflection, where we are distanced from the action, and where quite different language is used. Where we are communicating face to face, we are also dependent on the context, and what we say is difficult to understand without the context being known.

The mode scale or continuum can thus be set out like this:

Language

ORAL ---------------------------- WRITTEN
Context dependent ---------- Decontextualised
Concrete experience -------- Abstract experience

Distance

ACTION ------------------------ REFLECTION
FACE-TO-FACE ------------- ABSENT

A good example of texts that change according to mode differences is provided by Hood (1990), in a context of cooking. At the action, face to face, spoken end of the scale the interactants say things like "put this in now", and "That's OK" where we only would know what *this* and *that* are if we were present. But a recipe, which is a written text that must stand up relatively independently of context is different. We would read in a recipe *Beat egg whites until they hold firm peaks,* with *they* this time linking back to *egg whites* within the text itself. This text is not so dependent on its immediate context. Here we have moved along the mode scale, to at least the middle, away from the direct action. Finally there is a much more reflective text: *The addition of the beaten egg whites provides the necessary aeration to enable the souffle to rise.* Here we are at the other end of the scale, well away from the action, and the language reflects this. There are features of language here that are peculiar to writing, in particular the nominalisation seen in *addition.* In speech we are much more likely to refer to an action by using a verb - *add the egg white.* But in reflective writing like this text, abstracted away from the action, we find that the typical verb has been replaced by a noun, *addition.* This makes the language more abstract, a functional thing to do if your aim is to be more reflective. Not only do we have an abstraction being introduced, but the new abstract thing *the addition,* itself becomes the agent of another action: it can *provide* (*the necessary aeration...*).

We can therefore see how the mode variable in the register clarifies for us what are the language demands of writing. These are not language features that are readily apparent in speech, where we use direct experience and rely on the context more to make the meanings. What is involved in literacy development is the gradual control of more abstract uses of language, where the immediate context is not available and the writer/reader must be able to construct/reconstruct the context. To help learners become literate we must help them to control the different language features involved here. We can do so by gradually introducing new situations in our classrooms where the physical context is not so readily available, shifting from speech in action to oral recount and to written recount and finally to the more reflective written exposition or report (for a fuller account of this, see Hammond and King, 1989).

Implications of Field and Tenor Aspects of Register

The language model outlined above also provides us with other clues to literacy development and to the language awareness needed in literacy. The variable of field involves the content of a subject area, where readers must be able to learn new lexis (processes and participants) such as *aeration, fold* and *souffle.* Some of these terms are specific to cookery (*souffle*) while others are everyday terms used more technically (*fold*); both types of lexis need to be understood by the learners.

Cont. ▶

Notice that the spoken text had no technical lexis in it, while technicality is much more apparent in the written texts. The tenor aspect highlights the way writer and reader relationships are established. With beginners who are illiterate in L1 we are faced with the same situation as young readers who must appreciate that writing is not like face to face dialogue - there is no speaker present. In writing the distant writer has to use devices to make their presence felt, in various ways. Sometimes, as in narrative, the writer intrudes a point of view, but in other genres the writer's presence is deliberately obliterated. Passives are used, or first person plurals (as in this text!). These are all language features that are peculiar to writing and that we need to help our learners to appreciate.

Summary and Teaching Implications

We have argued that part of the process of becoming literate involves the learner in becoming more aware of language and how it works to make meaning. As this takes place, learners' own language proficiency will itself be enriched and enlarged, as they expand their ability to learn how to mean. This focus on language itself involves making the language visible to the learner, thus enabling them to use the language system as both readers and writers. Oral experience of language is a key element in all language development but some practices which focus on oral language activities can unintentionally limit our students' literacy development, by restricting their ability to become proficient in the typically decontextualised language of the written mode.

We should certainly start with familiar experiences and use concrete contexts and functions with beginners, but it is important to move gradually to new contexts, new, more abstract information and more reflective uses of language so that our students can learn to control the different elements of the written language. The various elements of the written mode can be introduced to students in the context of communicative activities that are purposeful and meaningful to the learners, but it is important to be explicit about these language features, and to point them out directly in the relevant learning contexts as students engage with print. Language for many learners is not very visible and it is not likely that the learner will attend to it unless we focus directly and explicitly on it so as to assist them to develop their literacy competence. The evidence is now clearer that attending explicitly to language itself and making it more visible to students is a necessary and critical part of their literacy development, and of their language development as a whole.

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PracTESOL

Producing and Using Bilingual Big Books with Junior Primary ESL and Mainstream Children

Susan A. Hayman writes about the practicalities of bilingual Big Books.

I teach a Junior Primary class in a school with a high percentage of NESB children. Producing and using Big Books is an ongoing part of my Language Arts program for the whole class and a strategy that can cater for NESB children within a large and disparate class, integrating the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and providing for affective, sociocultural needs as well. It fits in well with the school's policies of using process writing and language experience approaches that reflect the multicultural nature of the school community.

In the spirit of process writing, the children's participation and input into the production of the books is as valuable as the use they will get from the books, and the actual books themselves.

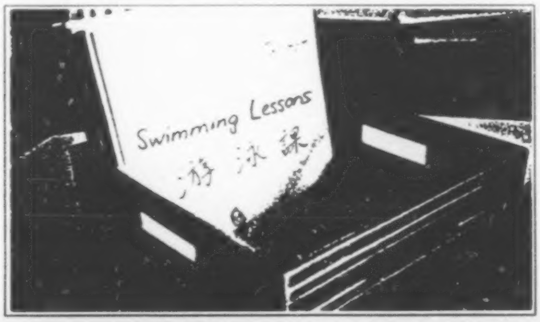
Production of Big Books

Producing Big Books in quantity has been a new experience for me, but it certainly is entirely feasible to do it without undue pressure on learners or teachers (especially with school assistant and parent involvement). It is very time effective, as the older children are already used to reading commercially-produced Big Books, and the new ones learn quickly.

With some variations, the steps in the production process are basically as follows:

- choice of topic, or photo
- discussion, and writing of story, report, or description
- illustration, if appropriate
- translation into another language, if appropriate and possible

We have bought uniform-size blank Big Books (30cm by 42cm), made by Longman Cheshire (a set of 5 for approximately $10.00). These are hard-wearing, good quality books - a great improvement on the stapled-together, not so long-lasting books we have all made in the past. I recommend them highly. Another advantage is that storage in the classroom or library is easy: the books fit neatly into large plastic storage cubes.



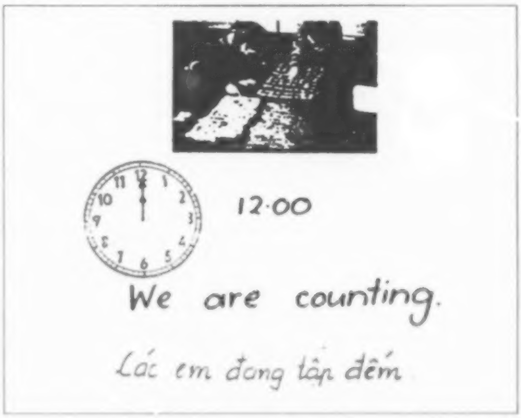
Some Focus Points for Big Books

1. Using basic structures

The first book we made was a record of routine events at school. I took photographs of children participating in a range of different classroom activities. We used a basic structure to label each photo:

We are hopping
We are painting
We are listening to a story

The Vietnamese school assistant wrote the translation for each sentence (using a different colour texta from the English writing), and some children illustrated the front cover. (I added clocks on the basis that the older children learning about time would concentrate on that aspect if they were ready to.)



12·00

We are counting.

Các em đang tập đếm

Later we used other teacher-directed structures, with the children writing or dictating the variations. For example,

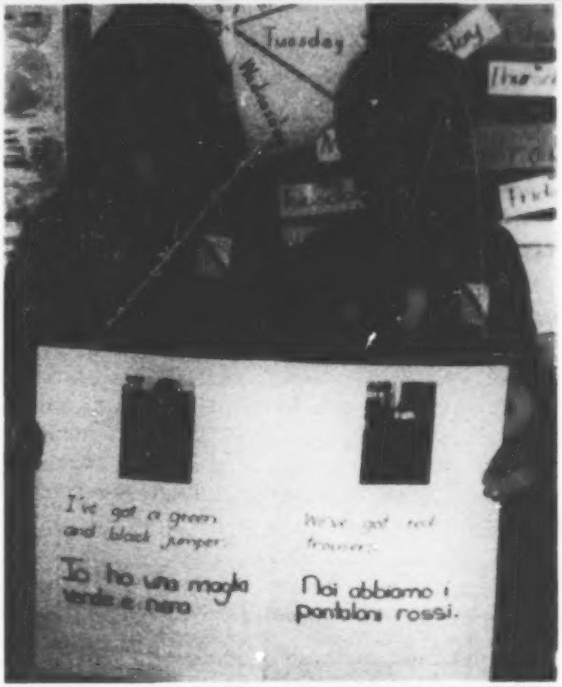
I'm Ajlisha and I'm good at running.
I'm Antonio and I'm good at going out to dinner.

"I like apples", said Nikolaos.
"I like lunch", said Anh.
"I like doing work", said Bradley.

I've got a striped jumper.
We've got white shoes.
I've got a kangaroo on my jacket.

This focus on structures is particularly suited to translation to make a bilingual book. With so much repetition of structures, ESB children can find a pattern in the other language; equally, it makes it easier for NESB children to read in their first language to the rest of the class.

Cont. ▶


I've got a green and black jumper

Io ho una maglia verde e nera

We've got red trousers

Noi abbiamo i pantaloni rossi.

2. Drawing on class experience

By drawing on class experiences such as excursions, swimming lessons, Sports Day, or Our Healthy Lunch Day, the production process is very interactive, involving a lot of discussion and negotiation. Examples are:

- children sort photographs into sequence
- children write the story-line or particular parts of the story together
- if there are no photos, children choose an aspect of the story to illustrate themselves

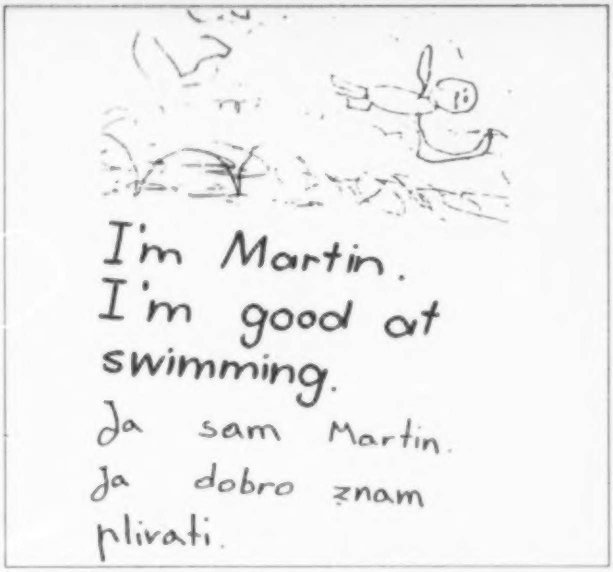
For NESB children it is important to provide not only excursions, but experiences in English that they might otherwise only experience in their first language, such as shopping and cooking. It is also important to recognise events when they happen, and use them as good motivation for writing and reading. Photographs are a very powerful means of recording and inspiring, helping children to remember and name events, places, people and objects, generating lots of oral language, as well as providing lots of pleasure. In a different way paintings and drawings are very effective too.

3. Making a class version of Songs and Poems

Children illustrate our favourite songs and rhymes. This may be a narrative such as *The owl and the pussycat* or *Tiddalick the frog,* which fills an entire book; or a collection of songs or nursery rhymes. Because they know them so well, even the newest children join in the reading.

4. Combining writings on a topic

These books can also be collections of children's work on a given topic, eg *My family,* or free choice. For younger children it may be something they have dictated, whereas for older ones it is their own written language.


I'm Martin.
I'm good at swimming.
Ja sam Martin.
Ja dobro znam plivati.

5. Drawing on different cultural experience

NESB parents write traditional stories from their cultures, or events from their lives (for example, the experience of migration) for translation into English for bilingual books.

Use of Big Books

Once produced, these Big Books can be used as part of the Language Arts program by the whole class, small groups, pairs and individuals, for:

- free choice of reading materials
- shared book experience
- silent sustained reading
- reading with parents, bilingual school assistants, children and teachers from other classes
- taking home to share

The greatest use these books get in my classroom is shared reading: usually when some children have finished an activity before the rest of us, one child will choose a Big Book and another will help hold the pages, while they all read it together.

Advantages of Producing and Using Big Books

Reading together as a class provides a non-threatening situation, where everyone can take risks and participate to the best of their ability - a great need for NESB children, to be joining in as others do. Children also want to participate because it is fun: they enjoy the stories, having a turn to lead the reading by pointing to the words, seeing a photo of themselves or of an event they remember, seeing the sentence or illustration they contributed, anticipating the bit where their name appears. Self-concept is enhanced.

Languages other than English are valued. Children see, hear and read their first language next to the English text in the bilingual books. This extends to awareness of similarities and differences between many languages.

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Translating and reading in LOTE provides opportunities for parent involvement: children enjoy having their parents in the classroom, parents observe and contribute to what happens in the school, and our reading materials begin to reflect the multicultural reality of the community. Many parents are unable to join us in the classroom or on excursions, but when their children take home a Big Book with photos and stories of special events, or daily activities, they can get an idea of what we have been doing.

Because the books relate directly to their own experiences they are more relevant and meaningful to the children than commercially produced materials. They provide many cues for understanding, which means many opportunities for the development of language skills building on their previous learning. I believe that children take from this experience what they are ready for, according to their level of proficiency, not just NESB children but ESB as well.

In class readings of the Big Books, older or more able children act as models (unconsciously of course) for pronunciation, intonation, pause, gestures, facial expressions. Children listen to, join in with and respond to stories, songs and poems.

A wide range of learning is fostered through the production and use of these Big Books. For example, the content is expressed through a wide range of language forms and functions, which can be focused on where necessary. Sentence patterns are related closely to oral language, and there is plenty of repetition (within, and of, the books) which helps NESB children to recognise new words or phrases, and to use them themselves. Children start off by joining in and "reading" from memory. They gradually learn to recognise names and commonly used words, letters and structures (eg *I can, I like*). From these basic structures they can learn to generalise rules about English. They learn to predict and make use of context. As they get older, they become aware of, and transfer to their own writing, correct spelling, and eventually punctuation. And in addition to gaining skills with the forms of the language, they see how a genre is made up. For example, as they sort photos of an excursion, putting them into chronological order, they see how a basic story line develops, with a beginning, middle and end.

Perhaps the most important point to make in conclusion is that these Big Books work for all the different levels of proficiency in my class, and they bring the children's experiences together in a fully shared way.

Susan Hayman is a trained TESOL and EFL teacher. She has worked as a Junior Primary teacher in South Australia in schools with high percentages of children from non English speaking backgrounds, and as an EFL teacher of adults in Finland. She is currently working as Coordinator of the Women's Studies Resource Centre in Adelaide. Photographs by the author.

Recycling Language: A Suggested Teaching Approach for ESL Students in Primary Mainstream Classes

Alison Standish writes about how she and her colleagues used ideas from a workshop from About Teaching Languages to develop strategies for teaching primary classes with ESL learners specific written English language structures and items. She shows us examples of material on letter writing for Infants (Prep/Kindergarten) and writing a report about a news program for Year 5-6 learners.

As an eager first year ESL teacher I felt compelled to help my colleagues when they spoke of problems they were having with their ESL children in the classroom. They voiced frustration at the difficulty their students were having in acquiring some of the written forms of English and were aware that their students' oral language proficiency didn't easily transfer to written tasks. It was this specific concern that I wanted to address and so organised a Curriculum Day that would focus on teaching strategies in the mainstream classroom which would help our ESL students in this area.

We were fortunate to be able to participate in a half-day workshop in which we were presented with the idea that ESL students need more than just exposure to English and its forms; they need opportunities to recycle the language in a non-threatening environment as a class and a group before they are expected to produce it and use it on their own. By designing learning activities with a clear language focus we can promote language acquisition in the classroom. We also need to provide an environment that allows for this language acquisition to occur. This didn't sound like anything new to us. As a staff we have been involved in ongoing Professional Development, we were aware of Brian Cambourne's Conditions of Learning and we were using a whole language approach; we felt that we already were allowing for language acquisition to occur in our classrooms. However on closer scrutiny we realised that what was happening in our classrooms was somewhat haphazard.

Some topics were developed without any language focus. The Infant grades were doing a theme on *People Who Help Us*. They had been on relevant excursions, listened to guest speakers and done a lot of language work as a result. However when their teachers stopped to think about it they couldn't actually define what language they wanted their students to acquire. On the other hand, some teachers knew exactly what they wanted their students to achieve linguistically but weren't providing a range of activities that would allow for this acquisition. This was particularly noticeable in the upper grades. As an example, one grade 5/6 teacher wanted her class to write a report on an item from *Behind The News* (a current affairs program aimed at 10-12 year olds.) The class took notes whilst watching the show. Afterwards the teacher modelled writing a report with the whole grade, talking about the introduction, main points and paragraph. The students were then expected to use their notes and write their own reports. The teacher felt that having modelled this genre to her students, they would be able to grasp the pertinent aspects of it and produce their own reports. She was disappointed with their work. The students grappled with the task and although they could produce a piece of factual text they hadn't succeeded in using paragraphs and writing a comprehensive report. To succeed with this task students need to be able to write in the past tense and use logical connectives and prepositions. They also need to know how to take notes. All these things need to be taught; we can't assume that our ESL students have these skills. Further on in the article I will demonstrate how to build up a series of activities around these specific language needs.

How then do we provide an Environment that allows for Language Acquisition?

We should be planning units of work that allow our students to work through the following stages: Initial Shared Experience, Level 1 Recycling Activities, Level 2 Recycling Activities and Level 3 Recycling Activities which will then hopefully lead to Spontaneous Communication both inside and outside the classroom. I will give a brief explanation of each stage and the types of activities that can be used to implement them.

Initial Shared Experience:

This experience is designed to provide optimum language input which students will utilise for acquisition. It should be a whole language experience where the focus is on the content and where understanding is supported by a clear context and visual aids. This stage is important as it exposes students to authentic uses of English, modelling standard language forms as well as developing familiarity with the sound, rhythm and patterns of English. The teacher plays a key role at this stage by making the language focus explicit although she isn't necessarily providing the language input. It might come from the students' peers or visual materials.

Initial shared experiences can be presented in spoken or written form and can include activities such as: a story, poem, rhyme, chant, song, spoken dialogue, play, video, film, newspaper or magazine article, letter, invitation or a demonstration of some sort.

Cont. ▶

Level 1 Recycling Activities

This stage involves presenting language from the initial experience and recycling the language focus in different contexts. The students are engaged in responding to and interacting with the content through a variety of tasks but they are not expected to produce the language individually. Activities at this level create a positive environment for language acquisition as students are invited to respond to the language experience, verbally and non-verbally, at their own comfort level and with the support of their peers.

Activities appropriate to this level include: exploring the linguistic features of texts, building story maps, diagrams and charts, building a text as a group, re-telling a story, chants, action rhymes, songs, choral activities, role plays, team games and board games.

Level 2 Recycling Activities

Activities at this stage are designed to encourage students to use the new language in purposeful ways in the context of different tasks whilst working in small groups or pairs. Activities are cognitively challenging, however the students are supported in producing the language by visual aids, by the degree of predictability and familiarity in the language demands of the activity and by their peers working together and pooling their language knowledge and skills. This stage provides students with successful experiences in using English, after they have had adequate opportunities for exposure and modelling.

Activities appropriate to this level include: retelling a story, role plays, making a game, playing a game, writing a script, letter, report or story as a group, writing sentence strips, sequencing activities and information gap tasks. Co-operative group work is very good at this stage.

Level 3 Recycling Activities:

This stage involves planning opportunities for individual students to use the language of the unit along with their total language repertoire in personal and creative ways. They are required to use their developing competence in new contexts. These activities generate more comprehensible input for the class from the language produced by the students themselves.

Activities appropriate to this level include: performing a play, designing and carrying out an interview, surveying a group and presenting the findings, writing for an audience, creating a new version, making a personal response to a story, song or poem and listening and reading for enjoyment and information.

Spontaneous Communication:

The language focus of a given learning unit now becomes part of the class repertoire through deliberate planning to use and incorporate this language in the classroom and in the school.

The language focus provides the link between all of these stages; there will be a range of activities but they will be bound by this focus. The students can move backwards and forwards between the three recycling stages, depending on their needs. As their competence develops, the teacher can slowly take away the supports provided by the Level 1 & 2 Recycling Activities and lead her students to successful acquisition of the particular language focus.

Explanation of these stages helped us to refine our thinking. We realised that we needed to hone down what we were presenting to our students. Instead of providing them with an eclectic mish-mash of activities related to a theme or topic, we should be deciding on a relevant language focus that can be taught within a topic and then designing activities to promote the recycling of this language focus.

The Grade 1/2 teacher wanted to capitalise on her grade's enthusiasm for writing letters after they had been on a visit to the Post Office. She put a large letter box in her room which was cleared at 12.00 each day. The children delighted in writing letters to each other and their friends in other grades. Having modelled a letter to the class, discussing the lay-out and positioning of the address, date and signing off, the teacher was disappointed when most of the letters were something like this:

> Dear Linh, I like playing with you. My
>
> phone number is 3276991. What is
>
> yours?
>
> From Abdurrahmen.

Although this letter shows some awareness of lay-out, the teacher realised that her student needed more exposure to the type of content that can be put in a letter to a friend.

Had this teacher and the Grade 5/6 teacher mentioned earlier given their grades activities where they could recycle the language of letters and reports with the support of a group before they expected them to produce them on their own, they would have made their language focus more accessible to their students and would have achieved more satisfying results.

I have used these two examples to demonstrate how to build up a series of lessons around a specific language focus.

Cont. ▶

Grade 5/6

LANGUAGE FOCUS: Writing a report:- using logical connectives
- using prepositions of time and place
- using past tense
- forming a logical paragraph.

ACTIVITIES:

INITIAL SHARED EXPERIENCE

- Watching *Behind The News*. Focus the students' listening. Tell them what they're listening for, in this case the story on the Gulf War. Guide their listening with questions like:

  Where did it happen?
  When did it happen?
  Why?
  Who was involved?
  How did it happen?

- After this, discuss the report on the Gulf War.

LEVEL 1 RECYCLING ACTIVITIES

Make an information chart with the grade (if you have a large grade it would be better to do this in smaller groups).

WHERE?	WHEN?	WHY?	WHO?	WHAT?
Kuwait Iraq	August 1990	Oil Power Greed	Iraq USA United Nations	Invasion of country

- Start by putting words in charts, use them to build up sentences

  Show how to build up complex sentences by using logical connectives, underline them.

- Build up sentences appropriate to each column

  The Gulf War happened in .... on.............because.............

  The countries involved were.....................

  Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait because...............................

- Underline the prepositions
- Discuss which words in the sentences tell you where it happened, why it happened, etc.

LEVEL 2 RECYCLING ACTIVITIES:

- Working in small groups
- Each student has a sentence strip with a sentence from the chart. In their groups they have to decide who has the sentence that tells you where/when/what/why it happened.
- Give students the beginnings of sentences or the skeletons of them and they have to complete them (can do this in pairs.) filling in the where/when/why/who/what.
- It is very important to keep the charts displayed around the room so that the students can refer to them at any stage. Combine the sentences from where/when columns to make a paragraph.
- Build in more information - *exactly where did it happen? Near the border? In a mountainous region?*
- The Why column can be built up in the same way to make another paragraph.
- Students watch BTN in groups of 5/6- one person in each group responsible for taking notes or remembering the Where information, another for the Why information and so on. Each group is responsible for a different news item. Use this information to build up their charts. They may wish to start with one word and then move onto a sentence or may be able to start with a sentence. In their groups work on connecting their sentences to form a paragraph.
- Look at each group's work - underline the prepositions, identify the parts of the sentences that tell you where/when/why/who and what.

PURPOSE

Providing language input.

Build up background knowledge for the children.

Recycling language from the news report.

Picking out main points.

Recycling and extending language of initial input.

Recycling some of the language of initial input in a different context.

Cont. ▶

ACTIVITIES:

- Give one group's sentences to another group and get them to identify where/when/etc.
- Have the charts from all the groups displayed around the room. Give out copies of the 1 or 2 paragraphs that each group has built up from their chart. In pairs students have to work out which chart goes with which paragraph.
  Prepare cloze exercises using the childrens' pieces of writing - leave out the words that indicate where/when/why, etc.
- Using another groups' paragraph, break it down into the various parts and fill in a chart to go with it.
- Use a newspaper or magazine article and follow the same procedure of filling in the chart with simple sentences. In small groups or pairs build up a text from this.

LEVEL 3 RECYCLING ACTIVITIES:

- Using one of the charts students write their own report - they may work in pairs to work on the chart and build up some sentences.
- Some students may still need to work in pairs to do this, while some mightn't reach this stage and need a pro-forma sheet with sentence beginnings to help them.
- Role play - students pretend to be a new reader giving a report. Read their written reports to a partner/group/grade.

At all stages of the work it is important to have a variety of visual prompts available as a reference for the students to use. Make sure the charts are visible and build up displays that will help them in their writing, e.g. useful sentence beginnings.

This unit could be further developed by building up from one paragraph to the next and developing a longer piece of text. Having become familiar with identifying the where/when/why/who/what parts of a written text, students would be able to use these skills in their own writing developed through a process writing approach and use them as a basis for questioning each other during conferences.

It will not be necessary for every student to carry out every activity. I have included a broad range of activities to demonstrate the types of activities appropriate to each recycling level.

PURPOSE

To invite students to use the language individually or with the support of a partner.

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Cont. ▶

Grade 1/2

LANGUAGE FOCUS: Writing a letter to a friend
- layout of letter
- the date
- the address
- beginning and signing off
- the content - what sorts of things you can put in a letter to a friend.

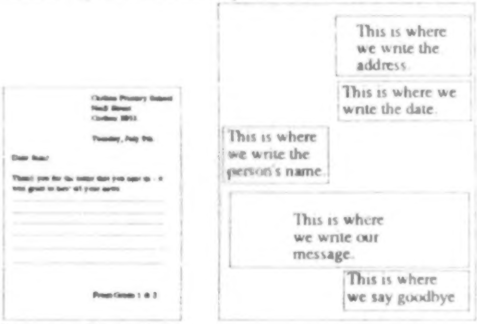
ACTIVITIES:

INITIAL SHARED EXPERIENCE:

- Read *The Jolly Postman* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg which has a variety of letter types in it. Ask the children to identify which letters were written to friends. Have copies of these letters blown up for all children to see.
- Ask: How do you know it was written for a friend? What did they tell their friend? Who wrote the letter? Where does it tell you this? Where does the person writing the letter live? Where does it tell you this?
- Read a letter written to the class by another teacher, analyse it in a similar way.

LEVEL 1 RECYCLING ACTIVITIES:

- Write a responding letter to the one received. Teacher models this to the whole class/group. Discuss the salient features while doing so, the lay-out and positioning of relevant parts.
- While writing the letter build up a chart that provides visual and written information about letter writing:


This is where we write the address.
This is where we write the date.
This is where we write the person's name.
This is where we write our message.
This is where we say goodbye

- Keep this displayed in the room for reference.
- Compile a list of *Great starts* for letters with the children, e.g.
  - *I'm feeling............today ....because............*
  - *after school today I'm..........................*
  - *I hope you're feeling better now.................*
- Do the same thing, making a list of *Great endings* for letters.
- Keep these on display.

LEVEL 2 RECYCLING ACTIVITIES:

- Students work in small groups to reassemble the letter that has been cut up into separate pieces.

I know that you have been sick and away from school for a few days.
Are you feeling better now?

love Hatice.

Dear Tugba

Monday 8th July

162 Rathdowne St,
Carlton, 3053.

Today my class is having music.
I like playing the instruments when we sing.

ACTIVITIES:

- Have 2 letters with completely different information in them; one might be about a new puppy and the other about a cousin arriving from Turkey. Read them to the class. Cut them up and jumble the pieces. Give each child a piece and then have the group reassemble their letter, firstly working out which pieces belong to which letter.
- Students work in pairs to fill in gaps in a letter, to another class.
- In small groups students write letters to another group, using 2 dice as prompts. On one dice are 6 different letter beginnings and on the other 6 different letter endings; students roll the dice to determine how their letter is going to start and finish.

LEVEL 3 RECYCLING:

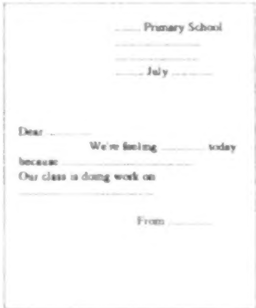
- To help the students work out what to write in a letter to a friend, you could pair them up and have them ask each other 2/3 questions that they would like to know the answers to. Each student then has to write the answers in a letter. One question might be enough for some children in the class.
- Have letter beginnings on sentence strips for students to use in their letters if they wish.
- Children read their letters to a partner/group. Discuss: What were you told? How did they start the letter? How did they end it?
- Students write their own letter to a friend/parents/grandparents. Some children may need the support of a pro-forma letter still. The charts and visual prompts that have been built up should still be on display as a support for children in their independent writing.
- Visit to local Post Office to post letters.

PURPOSE

Provides language input
Activates existing language knowledge.

Recycles the language of exposure in a new context.

Sequencing information in regard to lay-out.



______ Primary School
____
____
______ July ______

Dear ________
We're feeling ________ today
because ____________________
Our class is doing work on
____
From ________

Using language experiences provided in this unit to write a letter.

Drawing on total language repertoire.

Cont. ▶

What Problems are there with this Approach?

We felt very enthused after our workshop and were very keen to implement this approach. Despite our enthusiasm, we have found it difficult. It has been very challenging for us to analyse what we are presenting to our students and what we expect of them. When we sat down to plan units of work we found it very hard to determine a language focus, particularly at the Infant level. What exactly do we want our students to be able to do? Ask questions? Describe things? Formulate sentences in simple past tense? We need to look at the language needs of our students to determine what will become our language focus. Obviously different students will have different needs; our classroom organisation needs to be flexible so that we can target a small group if need be, or the whole class.

Some teachers in the upper school were concerned that this approach would be inappropriate for the native speakers in their classes and for some of their more proficient ESL students. Considering what I've just said I don't think this is an issue. Not all students will need to go through each recycling stage. Some students may be able to perform a task after the Initial Shared Experience whilst others will need numerous opportunities for recycling the language.

Having explained this approach, I don't mean to imply that everything we do in the classroom must have a language focus. Not all our teaching will have the goal of language acquisition; often we will just be familiarising our students with target language forms in a variety of ways without expecting them to acquire it.

For a lot of our children from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds, their time in the classroom is the only time they have for using English; they don't speak it at home and they don't need to in the playground if they have friends from the same language background. In light of this, it is essential that we make their time in the classroom as productive as possible. By being clear about what language we want our students to learn and providing our students with time to recycle English across a range of contexts before we expect them to use it or produce it on their own we can help make their acquisition of English as successful as possible.

Bibliography:

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Especial thanks to Elina Raso, Catholic Education Office, Victoria, for her time and advice.

Alison Standish has been teaching for nine years in government primary schools and is now a ESL teacher working with generalist classroom teachers at an inner metropolitan primary school in Melbourne.

Grass People
A Strategy for Teaching Teenage ESL Literacy Students

Jennie Medley-Barrera demonstrates how to use the Language Experience approach at secondary level to teach ESL learners who are not literate in their L1. The approach and examples have been used successfully with learners aged between 11 and 20.

Many published books may be unsuitable for older ESL literacy learners. They may fail to meet their interest level, and may be inappropriate culturally or syntactically. The Language Experience approach allows you to create relevant reading material appropriate for older learners at the beginning literacy stage, especially when the class includes speakers of a variety of languages, with different life- and cultural experiences. It provides a starting point for you to be able to create a common experience which forms the basis of a variety of aural/oral activities as well as meaningful reading and writing activities.

The success of the approach depends on a number of important principles: the atmosphere in the classroom should be on of support, security and acceptance and encourage plenty of stimulating activity; the room should provide areas for group work, peer interaction, silent individual work, private reading, taped-book reading and other activities; time and pace of lessons should take account of students' need for repeated exposure to English in meaningful contexts before they are required to respond and for plenty of time to listen, think, speak, read, write and complete activities and exercises; learning should be based on concrete experiences and build on students' experiences to move gradually to more abstract material.

A number of interesting choices are available to teachers, who should use their judgment when selecting an activity suitable for their students' age and social and intellectual development. For example, ant farm, earthworm tank, tadpoles developing into frogs, cooking, excursions to factories such as bakeries are useful activities.

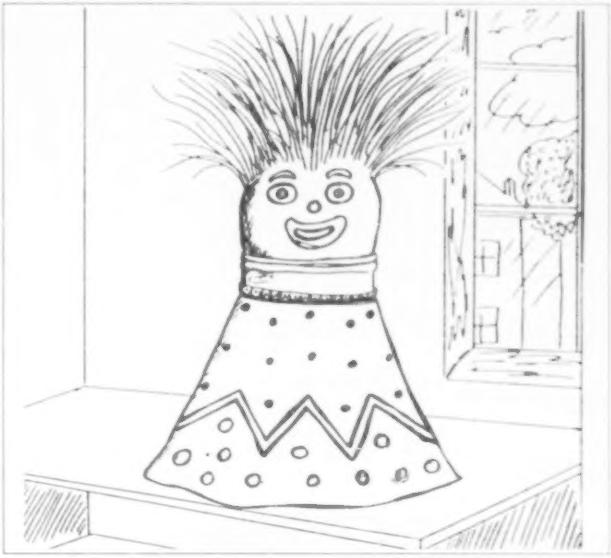
The various stages of the Language Experience approach will be shown using the activity of making *Grass People*.

How do you make Grass People?

You will need: stockings, soil, grass seed, jars, different coloured/patterned fabric or felt samples, craft glue, scissors.

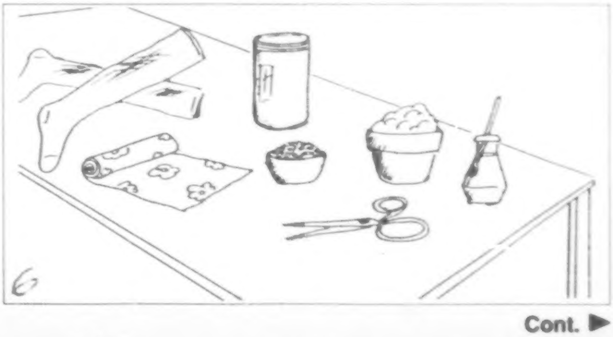
Procedure:

1. Cut a piece of stocking (from the foot to about half way up the leg).
2. Put grass seeds in the foot of the stocking.
3. Then put soil into the foot of the stocking forming a round ball shape.
4. Tie a knot in the stocking so that no soil can escape.
5. Leave a good length of stocking hanging down below the knot.
6. The round ball is the head of the grass person. Sit it in a jar. The knot is the bottom of the head.
7. Cut out eyes, nose, mouth, ears, cheeks, eyebrows, moustache, beard, freckles and so on to glue on to the head.
8. Decorate the jar too. This is your grass person's body. Include buttons, ribbons, pockets, arms, bow ties and so on.
9. Finally remove the head and fill the jar with water and replace the head. Make sure the bottom part of the stocking is dangling in the water. The stocking will absorb the water which will rise up through the soil to the seeds at the top.
10. Place the grass people near a window to receive sunlight. The grass seeds will germinate and the grass people will grow hair.
11. The grass will begin to grow within a couple of days. Make sure the water level is always topped up.



Stage One: Introducing the Activity

- have all the equipment you need ready to show the class.



Cont. ▶

- show the students a grass person you have already made.
- tell the students what they are going to make and show them the things they will need. This step is important for exposing the students to the English they will be using themselves. They can investigate everything and practise the vocabulary.
- encourage them to ask questions about the task. In this way they are immediately involved in the activity. It is important when introducing something or explaining the activity to begin with simple English and information.
- go through the steps of the activity quickly. Through demonstration and use of visuals or real objects, the spoken English you use will become more accessible. Providing opportunities for students to listen to English in context helps them to increase their listening and speaking skills.
- encourage students to discuss the activity in L1 if a bilingual teacher aide is available.

Stage Two: The Shared Experience

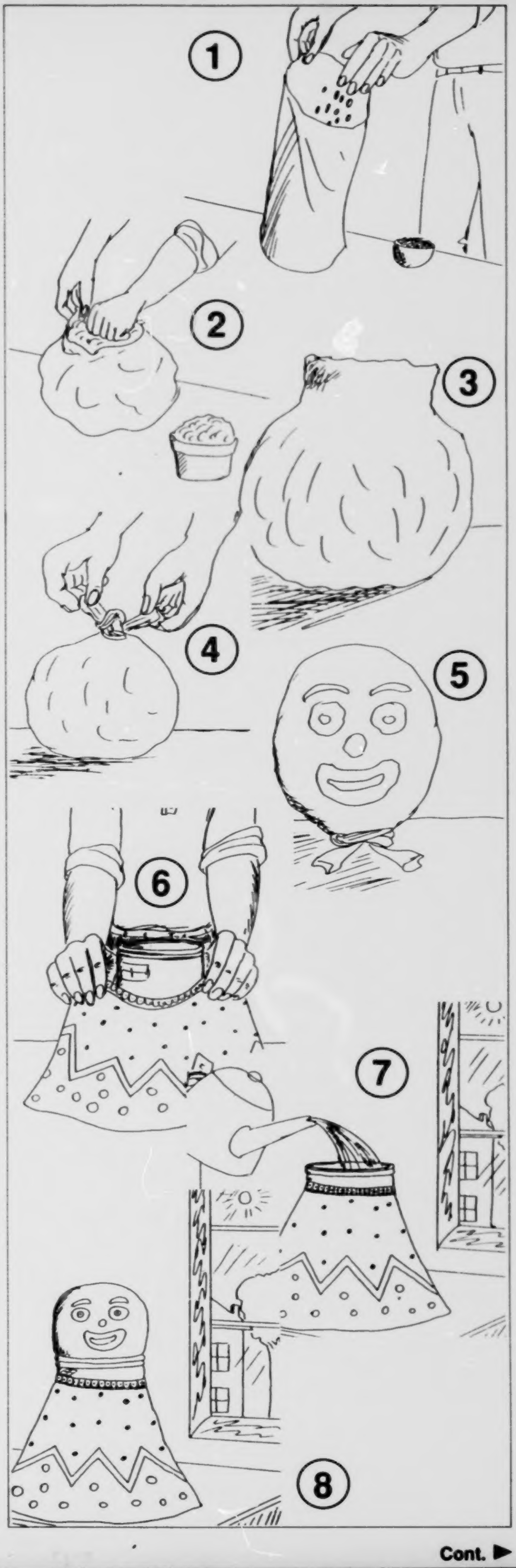
The students can begin the activity themselves. The emphasis at this stage is on developing/practising spoken English. The activity creates the opportunity for students to talk spontaneously about what they are doing.

You can guide the talk by encouraging interaction among peers and asking questions. Questions should elicit the essential vocabulary associated with the activity, repeatedly exposing the students to it while they are making their grass person. As well as developing students' aural/oral skills, the activity develops other skills such as observing, questioning, describing, defining, informing and predicting what will happen.

This stage is extremely important as the reading and writing activities that will come from it are dependent on the successful development of spoken English.

Stage Three: Follow Up Oral Work

- In a follow up lesson students can discuss the activity by looking at their grass people or photographs/video, or a combination of both.
- Spoken English will be developed further by discussing the shared experience. The English produced will depend on what the students got out of the experience and bring to the classroom. The simplicity or complexity of the language will depend on the spoken English level of the students.
- Students can be asked to sequence photographs or pictures. This focuses their attention on recalling a series of events and the procedure used for the activity.



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- **Discussing the photographs/activity enhances group participation and interaction and further develops aural/oral skills.**
- Students have the opportunity to listen to and learn from their peers, not just the teacher.
- Students' knowledge of the simple past tense is developed.

Stage Four: The Written Stage

In this stage the experience that you and the students have created forms the basis of a reading text. For students who have little or no experience with any written language, it is important to make the correlation between the spoken and written word clear. Just as their spoken English has been developed out of a first-hand experience, so can their reading material be developed.

A group wall story can be developed by the students with you assisting. A wall story can be constructed in a number of ways - on the blackboard/whiteboard, on butcher's paper or cardboard or on an overhead projector. The length and complexity of the story will depend on the oral level of the students. Stories will become more detailed as students' spoken English improves and as they become more familiar with the procedure.

Students dictate sentences for you to write up. They will need to use the past tense which they will already have practised orally. You can assist when students are unable to come up with the correct form of the verb. You can also demonstrate a number of English conventions, such as the left-to-right direction of written English and the use of full stops and capital letters. As the students' literacy levels increase, you are able to introduce and demonstrate further aspects of written English.

It is important that you write the words and sentences up on the board using correct spelling and grammar. As students gain more expertise with English, it is possible to negotiate correct structures and spelling with them through group discussion. However, at a beginning literacy level students are unable to self-correct and for this reason it is important that they are exposed to correct English.

This does not mean that you need to constantly correct students' spoken English. Rather, in much the way that parents speak to their toddlers in L1, you can at times repeat in correct form what they say, especially when the student's meaning is threatened. At this stage very little of what students say is correct; to be constantly correcting them would have an inhibiting effect and could make them reluctant to communicate at all.

Students can copy the wall story when it is finished. Copying is not a useless activity, especially for beginning literacy students who need lots of practice at pen manipulation, letter formation and so on.

An example of a wall story by beginning literacy students who had been in a literacy class for about six weeks:

> ***Yesterday we made funny, grass people. We stuck two eyes, one nose and one mouth on the faces of the funny people. Angelo, Thanh, Be and Tien stuck ears on their funny people. Angelo stuck a moustache on his funny Bill. Fu Jung and Tien put buttons and a bow tie on their funny grass people.*** *We put them in the sun to grow. They looked very happy.*

Stage Five: Reading

- Read the text to the students first. Then students are given the opportunity to read the text many times. This can be done in a group, in pairs or individually.
- Students can see first hand that the written text matches their spoken language.
- Because the text has been drawn from an experience they have shared, they have the background knowledge to make sense of the material. If the students are provided with reading material that is relevant and accessible to them, they are more likely to experience success and less likely to experience frustration. This is important for all students but particularly for beginning literacy students.

Stage Six: Follow up Reading Exercises

A number of exercises based on the text can be used to develop reading skills.

(a) Cloze Exercises:

The nature of the cloze exercises depends on the purpose of the task. They can focus on:-

- developing students' syntactic awareness of English by deleting structure words, eg, past tense:

  Yesterday we .... funny grass people.

- developing students' prediction skills and encouraging them to read for meaning by deleting content words:

  We stuck two eyes, one nose and one .... on the faces of the funny ....

- developing students' use of graphophonic cues by deleting letters from words:

  Fu Jung and Tien put bu.......... and bo.......... on their funny grass people.

- Multiple Choice Cloze can focus on any of the above. You provide alternative words and students choose the correct one.

  grass
  Yesterday we made funny green people
  great

- Picture Cloze provides cues for weaker readers. You can provide a picture that represents the word to enable the student to discover the deleted word more easily.

Cont. ►

(b) Sequencing exercises

- Various sequencing exercises can be undertaken by cutting up the text and reconstructing it at a number of different levels, depending on the level of the students. Some students may work at the sentence level while others may work at the word level.
- All or part of the story can be cut up into sentences. Students can work in groups, pairs or individually to sequence these sentences back into the whole story or a paragraph. Encourage students to read or re-read sentences and to discuss their order. Focus the students' attention on how punctuation is used to indicate beginnings and endings of sentences.

  Yesterday we made funny, grass people.

  We stuck two eyes, one nose and one mouth on the faces of the funny people.

  Angelo, Thanh, Be and Tien stuck ears on their funny people.

- Sentences can also be cut up into words beginning with one sentence at a time. Follow the same procedure as for sentences. At this level students' word recognition skills are developed.

  Yesterday *we* *made* *funny,*

  grass *people.*

- If you wish to focus on spelling for more capable students, cut some words up into letters to be reformed into words. This is especially useful for topic/content words.

  o t m u h *mouth*

- As sequencing exercises require quite a deal of communication between each other and with the teacher, students' aural/oral skills are also being extended simultaneously.

(c) Phonic Exercises

- The text can also be used for emphasising English sounds and for pronunciation activities. You or a student can read the sentences aloud while the others try to discriminate a particular sound aurally. I would not use this exercise initially with beginning literacy students.
- Charts of sounds can be made and displayed around the room. It is important to note that this emphasis on phonics is not done in isolation but as part of the focus on the whole class text.

  eg. focus on /s/ sound:

  Yesterday we made funny, grass people. We stuck two eyes, one nose and one mouth on the faces of the funny people.

(d) Grammar Exercises

Grammar can be focused on in a wall story or a class-made book. For example, the simple past tense:

(i) Completing a cross word grid

			c	u	t	1. We .... the stockings
		w	e	n	t	2. We .... outside.
			p	u	t	3. We .... soil in the stockings.
		t	i	e	d	4. We .... the stockings.
			p	u	t	5. We .... faces on the jars.
		m	a	d	e	6. We .... eyes, noses and mouths to put on
						the jars.
p	o	u	r	e	d	7. We .... water into the jars.
			s	a	t	8. We .... the funny people on the bookshelf.
		g	r	e	w	9. After three days the hair .... up.

(ii) A matching exercise

This can also be played as a concentration game.

to cut	put
to go	made
to put	poured
to tie	grew
to make	cut
to pour	sat
to sit	went
to grow	tied

(iii) A multiple choice exercise

eg

went
We *made* *water into the jars.*
poured

Prepositions can also be focused on.
For example: Sentence writing from a table. Students match up parts of the sentence using the correct prepositions.

We put soil	*up*	
We sat the funny people		*the stockings.*
We put the faces	*on top of*	
We put buttons		*the bookshelf*
We put eyes, noses and mouths	*on*	
We poured water		*the jars*
The hair grew	*in*	
Some people put a moustache	*on the front of*	*the faces.*

(e) Listening exercises

(i) Aural/oral exercises
Read the wall story aloud, leaving out words. Students respond with the correct missing word.

(ii) True/false statements
Make a number of statements based on the activity which students listen to and respond to with "true" or "false".

eg. *We put the funny people in the sun to grow.* *(T)*
We poured water into the stockings. *(F)*

Cont. ▶

(iii) Students circle the correct answer on a sheet of paper after listening to you read statements leaving out a word.

eg. *Yesterday we .... funny people.*

Worksheet: *1.* *[✓ made] / put / took*

2. *sat / put / cut*

3. ....

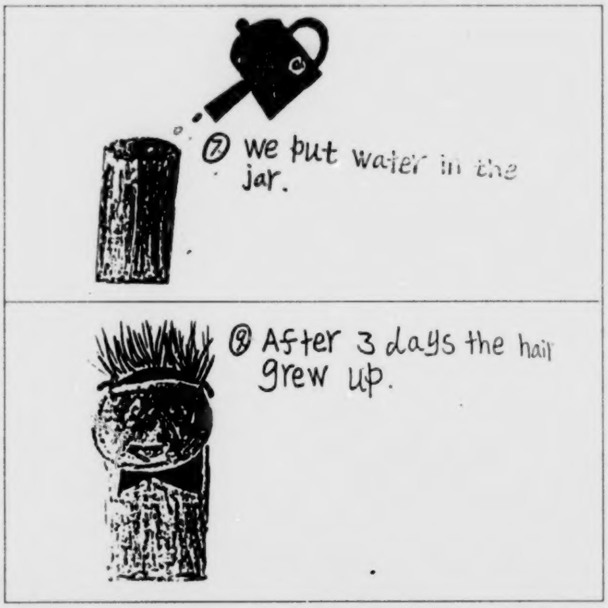
(iv) Bingo game

soil	people	cut	light	clothes
seeds	grass	tied	rubber band	stocking
water	jar	scissors	trowel	put

(f) Other exercises
Further exercises such as True/False questions, multiple choice questions and crossword puzzles can be included as students become more capable readers.

Stage Seven: Bookmaking

- A large class book and/or small books can be made. Students can take one or more pages each and write one or more sentences. Pages can be illustrated or photos can be used. Multiple small copies can be photocopied from the original so students can each have their own copy. Books can be bound on a binding machine if one is available or with wool or by stapling them. Students can illustrate the front cover. Students take pride in having their stories published.



⑦ we put water in the jar.

⑧ After 3 days the hair grew up.

These books are a valuable resource in the classroom. Motivation for reading their own stories is high. Class made books offer an alternative to commercially published books which often have little or no cultural or linguistic relevance to these students.

The Language Experience approach develops speaking, listening, reading and writing skills simultaneously. For students with little or no literacy, it provides instant success with the reading process. Other types of activities can also be developed: the Grass People activity generates a lot of maths eg, graphing and measurement. Experiences can be modified to suit the ages and interests of students.

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Hoy, K (ed) 1988, *Access to Literacy* Curriculum Development Centre Canberra

Jennie Medley-Barrera is a secondary ESL teacher presently on family leave. She taught many classes of pre-literate or illiterate students at Collingwood Language Centre, now Collingwood English Language School, Melbourne, from 1980-89. She also worked with Katherine Hoy on *Access to Literacy* and on *The Dynamic Classroom* (published by PEP).

This article is drawn from material developed at Collingwood English Language School which is being prepared for publication by the ESL Curriculum Project in the Victorian Ministry of Education and Training in 1992. It focuses on Stage 1L (Literacy Students) in the *ALL ESL Framework of Stages.* Thanks to Mary Rawson of CELS for her editorial assistance.

The Greenhouse Effect

Sandra Bouwmans and Anne Motti outline the development of a unit of work which they used with upper secondary advanced ESL learners in English Language Centres during their first six months in Australia. They demonstrate an approach which is suitable for and adaptable to meeting the needs of mainstream subject classes where there are ESL and other NESB learners among the students. It aims to develop students' reading and writing skills for school learning.

The approach is the Topic Approach devised by Bill Cleland and Ruth Evans. It is set out and progressively elaborated in the Teacher's Books in *Learning English through General Science* (1984), *Learning English through Topics about Australia* (1985) and *Learning English through Topics about Asia* (1987). The science topic book is based on year 10 materials and is suitable for near beginners in ESL. The material on Australian topics assumes more English and the material on Asian topics assumes a fairly advanced command of ESL. The books were published by Longman Cheshire in Melbourne.

Note: the experiment and graphics in this article have been adapted with kind permission of Greenhouse Action Australia from Gil Freeman (ed): *Greenhouse Activity Materials.* (Primary and secondary level booklets are available from the publishers at PO Box 175, Carlton South, Victoria 3053.)

The greenhouse effect is a topic of current concern and teachers are finding that they have to deal with it across many subject areas. At the moment there are a number of publications available to teach primary and secondary school students about this difficult topic, but much of the material would still be inappropriate for teachers in the mainstream with a proportion of NESB students in their class. Although materials are activity based and contain clear worksheets, there is not a balance between language and content.

This raises the whole problem of how material across subject areas has to be adapted for use with ESL and NESB students. We faced this problem when we recently tried to write a unit of work on the greenhouse effect. We'd now like to detail the process we went through trying to achieve a balance between language and content, and offer suggestions for how you could approach the topic.

One of the main problems with published materials on the greenhouse effect is that they begin each theme with an extended reading passage which requires the students to have already well developed English literacy skills to get into the subject matter. Often, carrying out the activities is dependent on having read and understood the passage. With ESL students, we are developing their English literacy skills at the same time as teaching them about new content areas. So we can never begin a unit of work expecting students to be able to read a passage written for a specialist audience.

The easiest way around this problem, we found, was to read all the literature available in the area to get the main concepts, and then to **write a reading passage** that contained these concepts. In doing this, it becomes evident that a particular use of English is needed to describe each concept. Eg, when we wrote the greenhouse effect topic, there were four main concepts which came out of the literature. These were: 1. the structure of the atmosphere and the process of climate formation; 2. the greenhouse effect as an imbalance in the process; 3. the causes of the greenhouse effect; and 4. the possible consequences of the greenhouse effect on Australia's climate and population.

Looking quickly at these concepts you can see that the students need the language of description to talk about concept 1, the language of causal relationships to talk about concepts 2 and 3, and the language of speculating and making predictions to talk about the final concept.

Just as important as identifying the English language needed by the students to talk about the concept, we found it was necessary to sequence the presentation of the material carefully. From this point on we will try to outline the procedure in some detail.

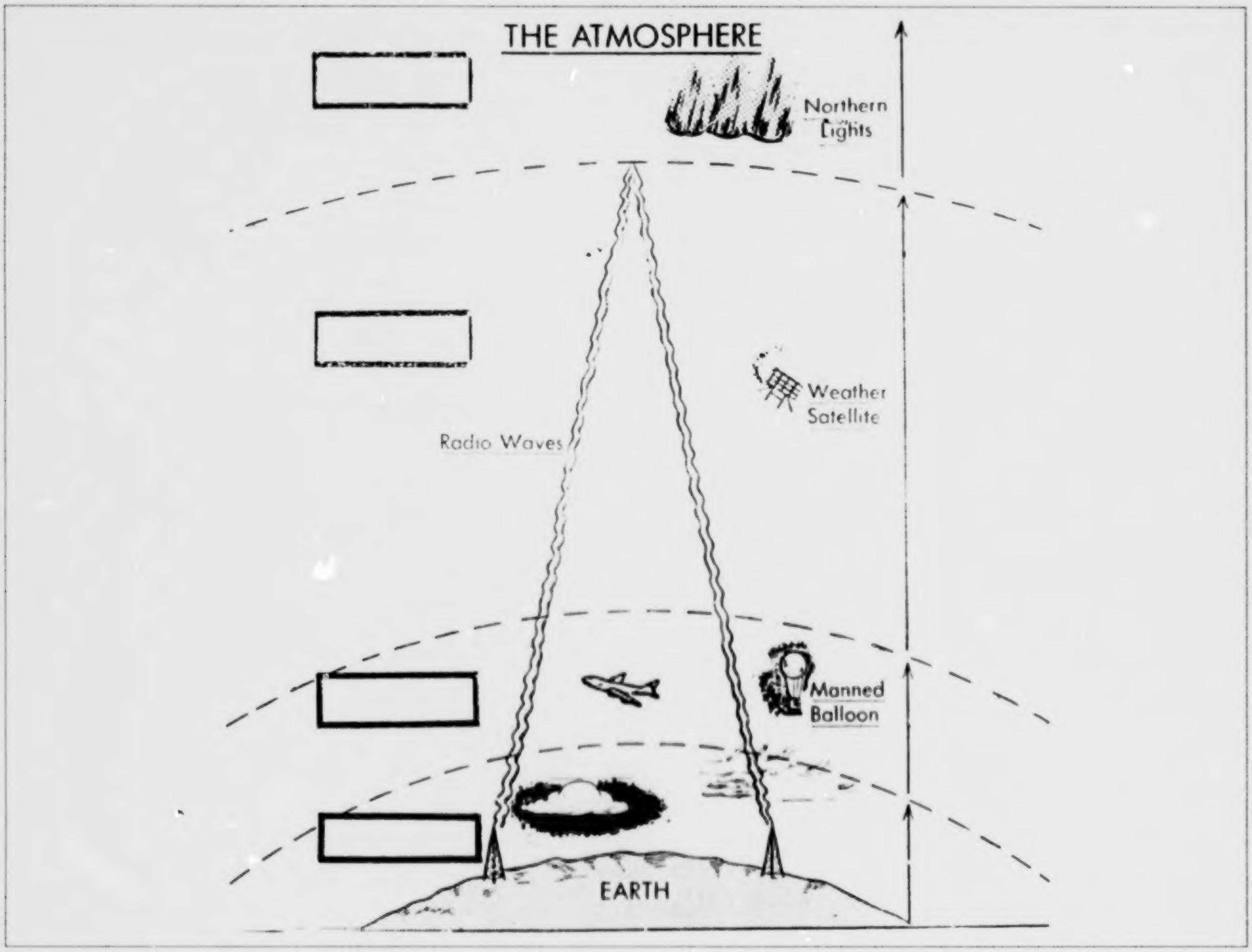
Each concept is introduced by a visual stage which may take the form of either an unlabelled diagram or an experiment that reflects the concept you are attempting to teach. As this unit contains four concepts, we found we had to vary the approach to ensure that the form of presentation was both the most appropriate for the particular concept as well as providing variety in the way the student was introduced to each concept. For example, for concept 1, we used these two visuals, one showing the structure of the atmosphere and another showing short and long wave radiation creating the world climate. We used these two visuals to establish the students' conceptual understanding of the topic as well as the extent to which they could talk and write about these complex concepts. However, with concept 3, we decided an experiment which simulates the greenhouse effect would be the best introduction to the concept. This experiment would be contrasted with the students' knowledge of normal climate formation.

Cont. ▶

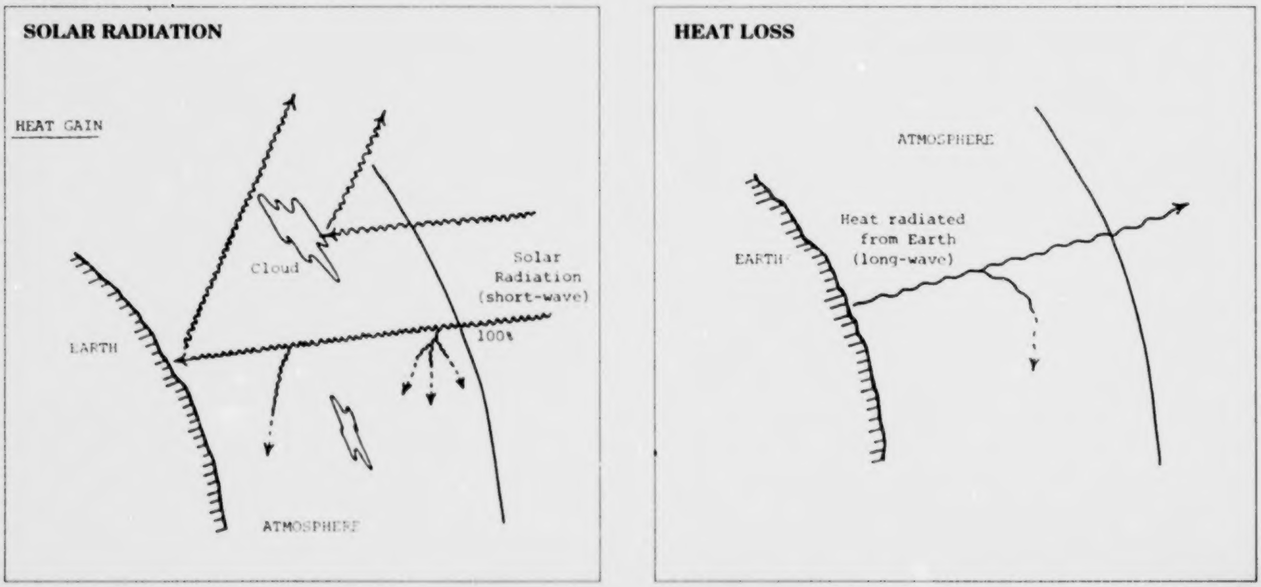
When trying to achieve a balance between language and content, you will find that lessons tend to take longer as students must be given a substantial amount of time to express their ideas both orally and in written form and then learn new subject-specific English to express the same ideas more accurately. For this reason, each concept outlined below would take about four hours to cover adequately with recently arrived ESL learners. However, you will save time later because you will have to spend much less time going over the material again. Students will be more likely to understand it the first time.

Concept 1. The structure of the atmosphere and the process of climate formation.

Visual 1.


THE ATMOSPHERE
Northern Lights
Weather Satellite
Radio Waves
Manned Balloon
EARTH

Visual 2.


SOLAR RADIATION
HEAT GAIN
Cloud
Solar Radiation (short-wave)
100%
EARTH
ATMOSPHERE
HEAT LOSS
ATMOSPHERE
Heat radiated from Earth (long-wave)
EARTH

Cont. ▶

Visual stage

Put up the unlabelled visuals that show the concepts. Elicit known vocabulary from students and thus get an idea of the extent to which they can express the concept. During this group discussion, feed in specialist vocabulary and have students practise pronouncing the words in the relevant sentences they are using.

Students now put labels you have prepared in the appropriate places on the visuals.

Students then write some sentences in their books about the visuals. A class dictation follows where students dictate one of their sentences to the class and then correct it together on the board.

(From the class dictation you can see the extent to which students understand the concepts that have been discussed and can express them in the specialist vocabulary. If their writing shows confusion, you have to decide whether the chosen visuals were a clear and accurate representation of the concepts or whether you have to use a more hands-on method of presentation eg, experiments which deal more thoroughly with junior science concepts like the differences between solid, liquid and gas. It is important to go back as far as is required to ascertain correctly students' conceptual level.)

A worksheet to guide students in forming their sentences incorporates Visual 1 and the following questions:

1. Define atmosphere

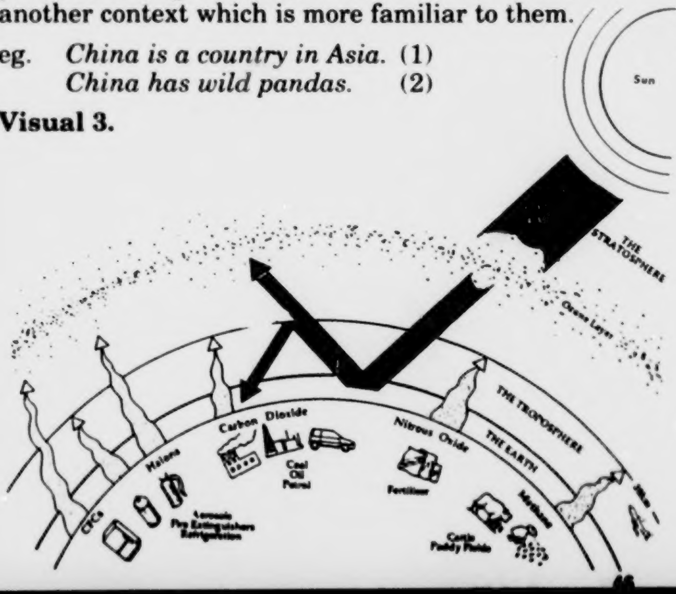
   Use the visual to help you write a paragraph about the atmosphere.

   Use *which* and *where* to talk about the different layers. eg, *The stratosphere is the layer where aeroplanes fly.*

The instructions indicate to students how their answers should be framed. For students to carry out the work of defining the atmosphere and its layers accurately, it would be necessary first to teach them the structures we use to define eg, *which* and *where*. For them to understand the particular usage of these words, use the words in another context which is more familiar to them.

eg. *China is a country in Asia.* (1)
China has wild pandas. (2)

Visual 3.



Discuss with students what the focus of each sentence is and once there is agreement that *China* is the focus and the remainder of the sentences give more information about China, ask if two sentences are necessary. At this point, students may try to combine the sentences with *and* but you would then point out that they are still using *China* twice. Offer *which* as an alternative, ask students to put it in the sentence and consider any deletions.

Allow students to play with the sentence until the required pattern is reached and they can see how *which* is used differently from *and*. After the initial example has been worked through, students volunteer similar examples. Alternatively, use pairwork to get the target structure from students and then check it with the whole group.

When you feel that students understand how *which* is used to define something we have named, they can practise this understanding by completing the worksheet on this concept.

For **concepts 2 and 3** students need an understanding of **natural climate formation.** If they do not have this concept, organise an experiment which shows the basic principles of climate formation, absorption and reflection of light.

Then put up Visual 3 against Visual 2 which shows natural climate formation. The third visual shows the reflected rays being blocked by a "blanket".

Group students and ask them to try to explain the differences between Visuals 2 and 3. The differences are recorded by the group reporter for later class discussion. To facilitate class discussion, it is worthwhile pre-teaching some English structures with fluent intonation and stress to express difference.

Eg.

The difference between Visual 2 and 3 is ....

In Visual 2 ....,

but in Visual 3 ....

In Visual 2 ....,

while in Visual 3 ....

In Visual 2 ....,

whereas in Visual 3 ....

Cont. ▶

Group discussion and reporting back can be followed by a worksheet reproducing Visual 3 and the following questions for written work:

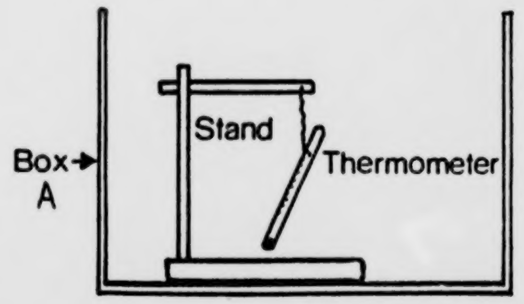
> Use this diagram to describe:
>
> 1. how the greenhouse effect is created
> and
> 2. the factors contributing to the greenhouse effect.
>
> Use the passives in your sentences.
>
> eg, for 1. *Short wave light is allowed through to the earth's surface.*
>
> for 2. *CFCs are used by industry and consumers.*

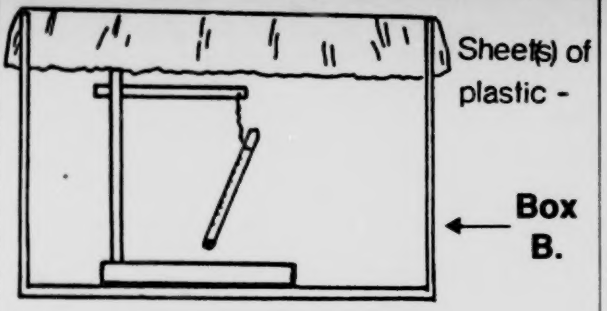
During class discussion when students report back their group findings, you can see whether it will be necessary to clarify the concept by doing an experiment that simulates the greenhouse effect or whether it will be necessary to develop more English language forms to express the concept adequately.

Brainstorm with students how to go about setting up a greenhouse model. Elicit suggestions until you have the model outlined below. (Greenhouse Action Australia.) We had a two-fold purpose in conducting the experiment. We saw it as a way of clarifying the greenhouse effect and also introducing students to the formal method of writing up an experiment in terms of *aim, apparatus, method, observations* or *results* and *conclusion*. By asking questions about the experiment and how it has to be set up, you are getting the method of the experiment from the students. Guided questions like: *What are we trying to find out?* and *How are we going to organise the experiment?* provide a framework for a formal write-up of the experiment. Later, after students have carried out the experiment and obtained the necessary data, discussion of questions like *What happened?* and *How do our results relate to our first question?* provide the remainder of the terminology required to complete the formal write-up. Students are now able to go ahead and do this because they have been through the various stages of the experiment orally and have acquired the specialist vocabulary necessary to write about it.

Experiment

A simple greenhouse model





Construct the apparatus as shown in the diagram. Get students to:

1. Measure the temperature of each thermometer at ten minute intervals.
2. Record the date.
3. Compare the results from Box A and Box B.
4. Describe how this experiment models the greenhouse effect.
5. Write up a formal science report of the experiment by using the guided questions suggested above.

Alternatively, for a less advanced group of learners, you could use the following cloze version:

Experiment on The Greenhouse Effect

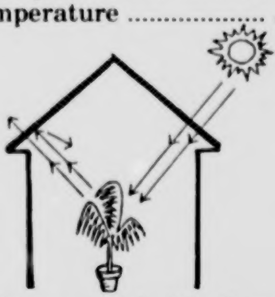
A What were we trying to find out?(AIM)

The earth is .... by four layers of atmosphere: ...., ..., ..., and ....,

For the last two .... years, we have been .... many gases by burning fossil ...., using spray cans and cutting down trees. These gases are like a .... around the ....

Some .... say these gases are making the earth .... because they are like a blanket around the earth, ... the sun's .... from escaping back into the ....

We .... an experiment to find out .... plastic over the box .... make the temperature ....



This picture shows a model of the Greenhouse Effect.

rays rise fuels the ionosphere
the troposphere preventing the exosphere
hundred earth blanket the stratosphere
scientists atmosphere hotter if
producing carried out surrounded would

Cont. ▶

B How did we organise the experiment? (METHOD)

We .... two ...., two boxes, two metal stands and a sheet of ....

We .... one thermometer inside the metal stand and .... it in an .... box, called Box A. .... we placed the .... thermometer in a stand in ...., and we .... this box with .... Both thermometers had a .... of 0°C at the beginning of the experiment.

C What happened? (RESULT)

After .... days, we .... the temperature of .... thermometers.

The temperature of the thermometer in Box A was .... the temperature of the thermometer in Box B.

covered thermometers five left
both temperature plastic
collected measured uncovered
placed then second
plastic lower than Box B

D What do our results show us? (CONCLUSION)

Our .... showed us that the .... covering Box B .... the air inside ....

The .... in Box A was the same as the air in the room because the box was not .... with plastic.

The plastic over the box has the .... as the greenhouse gases around ....

The greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will not let all the .... pass back into the atmosphere. The rays are .... in the troposphere, reflected back to earth and .... warm up the earth.

then experiment same effect
the earth trapped it
kept plastic hot
covered temperature sun's rays

Concept 3 is about the causes of the greenhouse effect. Visual 3 shows the contributing factors. To talk about this and how the greenhouse effect works students have to be taught the use of the passive, ie, they would have to be able to see that the agent is either not mentioned or put at the end of the sentence because it is not as important as the process. A role play of an experience familiar to students would be a good way of introducing the passive.

Put these sentences on the board

Go to the office. Your name was called.
Go to the office. The secretary called your name.

When asking the students the difference between the two sentences, focus on the different order of what happened and who/what made it happen. To see if students really appreciate the differences in the two forms you could ask them to make two similar sentences using *sports teacher / students / run / told / oval.* These are the forms you would expect to get:

The students were told to run around the oval.
The sports teacher told the students to run around the oval.

If the word order was appropriate but they were having problems with the verb form, their attention should be drawn to the correct way of constructing the passive ie, the verb to *be* in a particular tense + past participle of the main verb.

To tie this work on the passive in with the topic you can now give the students a worksheet with unlabelled Visual 3 on it. The worksheet directs students to explain the greenhouse effect and the factors which contribute to it. Before they do the worksheet students need to label Visual 3 as a class activity, associating the appropriate nouns and verbs with the processed detailed. Students will then talk about processes in the visual and to do this effectively they will need to draw on their knowledge of the passive. These are examples of the type of sentences that you want to elicit:

1. *Short-wave light from the sun is absorbed by the earth's surface.*
2. *Some of this light is reflected as long-wave heat rays.*
3. *CFCs are used by industry and consumers.*
4. *Methane is produced by livestock.*

If, when describing the processes orally, students continue to give the active form rather than the passive, you can return to the earlier discussion of which part of the sentence you want to highlight.

Concept 4 details the possible consequences of the greenhouse effect in Australia. By this stage of the topic, students will understand the greenhouse effect and will now be in a position to speculate and make predictions about the possible effects of the greenhouse on Australia's climate and population.

Provide an enlarged map of Australia and elicit what the climate is like now in different parts of Australia eg, *In northern Australia they have a wet season and a dry season while in southern Australia we have four seasons. Queensland has tropical cyclones.*

To aid these descriptions use pictures of different features of climate, eg, drought, monsoon, snow, flood. Once students have demonstrated that they have an understanding of present climate patterns in Australia and the consequences for the population, ask them to draw on their knowledge of

Cont. ▶

the greenhouse effect and try to predict what changes could happen in these areas. At this point, to help students frame their answers, ask them how we talk about the future when we cannot talk about the outcomes with certainty. If students volunteer *will* and *going to*, contrast these forms with *it is expected that . . ., it is possible that . . ., temperatures may . . ., tropical cyclones are likely to . . .* If students cannot grapple with the difference immediately, go back to examples which draw on their experiences. Contrast a series of pictures showing imminent action with a series showing ambiguous outcomes. Ask students to talk about the pictures using a particular form, later giving reasons for choosing one form over another.

During this discussion, you will be able to see the extent to which students appreciate the difference and at this point they can be referred back to the topic material to make further predictions.

Now set up a communicative game where students are given a worksheet detailing seven anticipated climatic changes, but some of these changes would be in question form and the others in answer form. Conduct a pronunciation practice first attending specifically to consonant clusters and stress patterns in words and question forms. Put students into A/B pairs to fill in the missing information on their sheets by either asking their partner questions or giving answers.

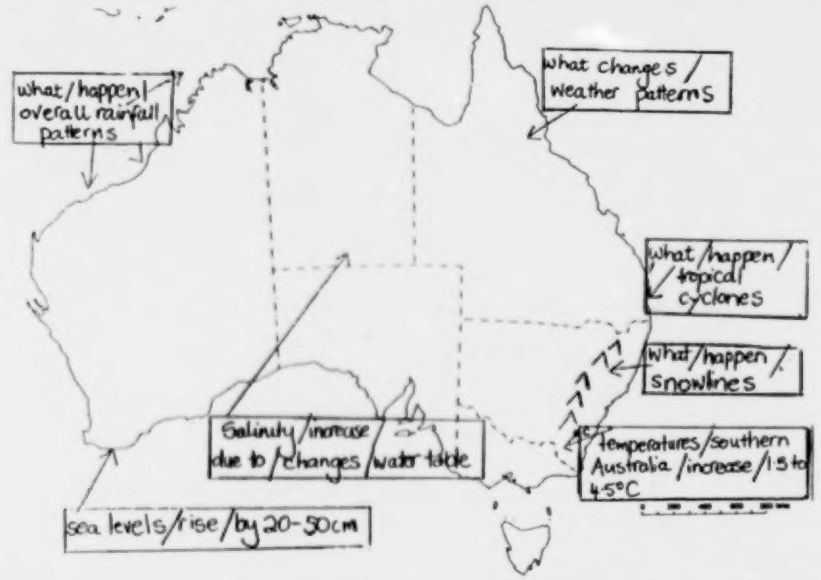
eg, Partner A has the prompt: *What / effect / temperatures / southern Australia?*

So Partner A formulates a question based on these prompts *(What might be the effect on temperatures in southern Australia?)* for partner B to answer from a similar prompt form on her sheet.

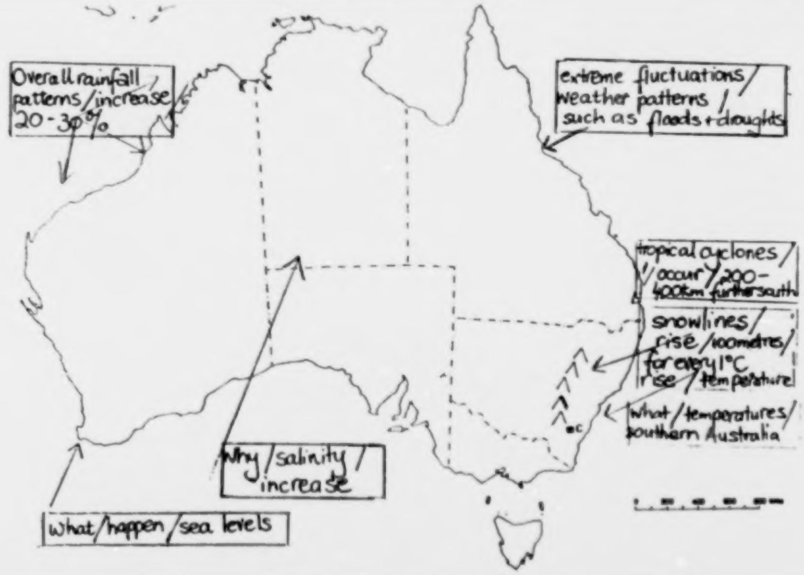
eg, *Temperatures / increase / 1.5 to 4.5 degrees celsius. (Temperatures in southern Australia might increase by 1.5 to 4.5 degrees celsius.*

From these examples you can see that the students have to draw on the appropriate tense and mood forms to frame their questions and answers.

Pair A


what / happen / overall rainfall patterns
what changes / weather patterns
what / happen / tropical cyclones
what / happen / snowlines
Salinity / increase due to / changes / water table
temperatures / southern Australia / increase / 1.5 to 4.5°C
sea levels / rise / by 20-50cm

Pair B


Overall rainfall patterns / increase 20-30%
extreme fluctuations / weather patterns / such as floods + droughts
tropical cyclones / occur / 200-400km further south
snowlines / rise / 100metres / for every 1°C rise / temperature
what / temperatures / southern Australia
Why / salinity / increase
what / happen / sea levels

106

Cont. ▶

To finish off the topic, give students a cloze exercise of the reading passage or provide a framework for them to write a guided composition on the greenhouse effect.

As you can see from this outline, conceptual understanding and the development of English literacy skills are linked and one cannot proceed without the other. So the challenge for any subject teacher is to devise ways of assessing students' literacy levels in English in terms of the material being taught and provide activities for students to develop and practise their skills so they are able to speak and write about the topic in the academic style required.

Reading Passage

The earth is surrounded by the atmosphere. It consists of four layers. They are the troposphere where our weather occurs, the stratosphere where aeroplanes fly, the ionosphere which reflects radio waves back to earth and the exosphere which is the beginning of outer space.

The stratosphere contains the ozone layer which is composed of a gas called ozone. It is a protective layer which filters out harmful levels of ultra-violet (UV) radiation from the sun.

During each day short-wave light from the sun passes through the stratosphere and is absorbed by the earth's surface. The earth reflects some of this light back into the atmosphere as long-wave heat rays. This is a natural process that creates the world's climate.

The greenhouse effect of the gradual warming of the earth's surface is the result of an imbalance in this natural process. Pollutant gases such as carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4) and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) are allowing the short-wave light from the sun through to the earth's surface but they are blocking the return of the long-wave rays and this is causing the earth's surface to warm up.

As a result of human activity, the amount of these gases in the atmosphere is increasing. Humans produce CO_2 by burning fossil fuels such as oil, coal and natural gas and by deforestation or the cutting down of trees. This process decreases the amount of trees available to absorb CO_2. Methane is produced by livestock, in rice paddies, in mining and from rubbish tips. Nitrous oxide is produced by car and truck exhausts and fertilisers. CFCs are used by industry and consumers, in aerosol propellants, foam plastics, refrigerators, air-conditioners, sterilisers and solvents. Halons are used in fire extinguishers. In general, halons are used less than CFCs but they are ten times more damaging.

It is expected that there will be many changes in Australia's climate by the year 2030 as a result of the greenhouse effect. Temperatures may increase by 1.5° to 4.5° in southern Australia and sea levels are expected to rise by 25-50 cm. Tropical cyclones are likely to occur 200-400 km further south than at present and salinity will increase due to changes in the water table.

Extreme fluctuations in weather patterns such as floods and droughts are expected. Rainfall patterns are likely to alter, with more summer rain in southern Australia and less winter rain in other places. Overall rainfall may increase by 20-30%. Snowlines are also expected to rise by 100 metres for every 1° rise in temperature.

Due to the serious threat posed to all life on this planet, positive steps are being taken by governments and concerned individuals around the world to control the many serious consequences that result from ozone depletion and the greenhouse effect.

Sandra Bouwmans and **Anne Motti** teach recently arrived secondary ESL learners in English Language Centres in Melbourne, Sandra at Brunswick ELC and Anne at Flemington ELC.

An Approach to Poetry for ESL Learners

Suzanne Courtice looks at poetry from a linguistic viewpoint and uses the resulting insights to show how ESL learners can be encouraged to write, read and discuss poetry in English.

Why Poetry?

The study of poetry in the classroom is a daunting experience for ESL students, and yet, not only is it a required part of the school curriculum, but it is also vital part of linguistic (and cultural) competence. As McRae and Boardman (1984:1) assert:

> Literature makes an irreplaceable contribution to the development of communicative competence. The ability to read literary texts with pleasure and understanding is a fundamental component of that communicative competence of the educated native speaker which is the final goal of foreign language students and their teachers.

The Problems for ESL Students

Native speakers bring to poetry a communicative competence, a sub-conscious if not conscious understanding of its structure, and certain conventional expectations of the poetry genre (even if exposure has been limited to pop songs and advertising jingles). When they analyse poetry, their evaluation is usually based on native speaker intuition, culture-specific word connotations, and subjective reactions to the text. The ESL student's problems are obvious.

However, an approach based on linguistic analysis can benefit all students, as it gives them the framework for a consistent method of approach which is centred firmly in the text.

At this point, I would ask the reader to read the poem *The Not-So-Good Earth* by Bruce Dawe. What do you think is the theme of the poem? Also the tone? Why?

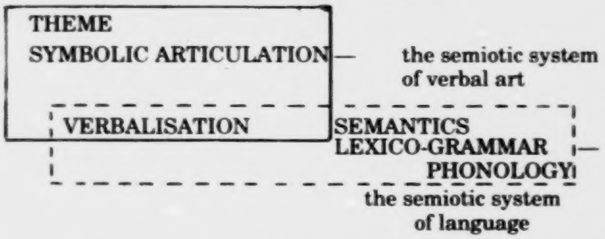
1 For a while there we had 25-inch Chinese peasant families
2 famishing in comfort on the 25-inch screen
3 and even Uncle Billy whose eyesight's going fast
4 by hunching up real close to the convex glass
5 could just about make them out - the riot scene
6 in the capital city for example
7 he saw better than anything, using the contrast knob
8 to bring them up dark - all those screaming faces
9 and bodies going under the horses' hooves - he did a terrific job
10 on that bit, not so successful though
11 on the quieter parts where they're just staring away
12 digging for roots in the not-so-good earth
13 cooking up a mess of old clay
14 and coming out with all those Confucian analects
15 to everybody's considerable satisfaction
16 (if I remember rightly Grandmother dies
17 with naturally a suspenseful break in the action
18 for a full symphony orchestra plug for Craven A
19 neat as a whistle probably damn glad
20 to be quit of the whole gang with their marvellous patience.)
21 We never did find out how it finished up . . . Dad
22 at this stage tripped over the main lead in the dark
23 hauling the whole set down smack on its inscrutable face
24 wiping out in a blue flash and curlicue of smoke
25 600 million Chinese without a trace.

When you have read this article, do the same exercise again, and see if your supporting reasons have changed.

Application of Systemic Functional Linguistics to Poetry

The main difference between non-literary texts and poetry is the idea that "a poem says one thing and means another". (Riffaterre: 1978:1) Poetry has a special status as a work of art conveying a message. When readers are examining what is happening in a poem, they must be simultaneously relating this to a symbolic level of meaning from which the theme gradually emerges. Hasan (1985:99) expresses this double decoding diagrammatically:

Verbal art and language



So, in the genre of poetry critique, we are looking at the meanings, the construction (including setting out) and the sound and seeing what this tells us about the symbolic level. This is a wide brief: we can narrow it down. We are only interested in these aspects in so far as they are *significant* in the thematic context. How do we recognise significant elements?

Significance

Cohesion in poetry is provided by *patterning*. Rhyme, rhythm and parallel grammatical structures replace the more conventional cohesive devices of prose texts.

Patterning also provides *contrast*. Where a repeated sequence is broken, the contrasting element is highlighted or foregrounded - and thus acquires significance. This break in the pattern also makes the reader re-evaluate the repeated elements, as contrast can only be comprehended in terms of the differences between the new and the old.

Cont. ▶

Contrast is also found when the poet refuses to fulfil the reader's expectation in some way. This could be structural, where the normal pattern of an English sentence or construction is varied, or lexical, where figurative language evokes unexpected images. A cliche has lost its force because the image, through constant use, has lost its power to engage the listener/reader with its unexpectedness.

So, when we first look at a poem, we are looking for elements which are significant because of their unexpectedness. The convention that a poem is complete in itself and symbolically coherent, means that, as well as searching for second level meanings, the reader/listener is engaged in the process of relating these to a theme. The emerging theme can help make meaning from previously obscure parts of the text.

I would refer anyone wishing for more detail to Hasan's book (1985). Although her level of linguistic analysis presupposes an extensive knowledge of Systemic Functional Linguistics, there is much in the book for the enthusiastic teacher.

An important part of this double decoding process is to realise that the situational context of the poem has its own, separate atemporal reality/context. An *I* in the poem does not refer to the real life poet (any more than we would expect the *I* in the novel, unless autobiographical, to refer to the author). Students should be made aware of the distinction between the poet and the narrator.

Enough of the theory. How does it work in the classroom?

Writing Poetry

Writing poetry can be a very satisfying activity. It is often easier for an ESL student to produce a poem in a guided classroom activity than it is to write prose. Books on the teaching of poetry contain many ideas designed to make it easy and fun for the students. However, if the teacher does not have a coherent approach, these remain isolated activities of limited value to the student. In order for the students to develop an appreciation of poetry and a critical sense, the poems they write should be evaluated in the same way set poems are - and the way I am going to suggest is based on linguistic analysis. In this way, students are learning correct linguistic and technical terms, and are appreciating the effects of patterning and other poetic techniques on the symbolic level. As well, in the ESL classroom, poetry can be used to exemplify language functions.

If

If I were a boy, I would
scratch in class
fight my friends
wear old clothes
I'm glad I'm a girl.

(a class effort)

As well as the language structure (*were* in the *if*-clause, and *would* plus the base form of the verb in the main clause), this type of patterning produces ellipsis, which is a cohesive device in text. Also there is the convention of layout. We discussed making the first and second lines one line and the effect this would have. The students felt it wouldn't look like a poem and we discussed the cohesive/unifying effect of lines of similar length. They also wanted lines 2, 3 and 4 to have a similar emphasis and felt that the rejected setting out would alter this. This led to a discussion of which part of a line was most important (the beginning - and the end, by virtue of the pause which is always there). The break in the pattern established by lines 2, 3 and 4 highlighted the thematically important line 5. The break is not only in structure, but also in the sound (the syllable/stress pattern). The choice of images led to some spirited comments about bias, sexism and self-esteem!

The significance of changing an established pattern is very clear in a student's poem (Hussein: 1986:305):

I sleep
He sleeps
I dream
He dreams
I wake
He wakes
I cry
He laughs

M. Salih

A gradual uncovering of this poem on an overhead transparency can be used to show the students how, once a pattern is established, they can make predictions about poem meaning.

The structural repetition is the background for the semantic contrast of *I cry He laughs*. The unexpectedness makes us reconsider the preceding couplets. There were two interpretations from the class. The first was that sleeping, dreaming and waking are actions everyone does. It is the way we feel about things that makes us different.

The second interpretation was that the *I* . . . *He* . . repetition suggested a relationship, a couple in love, sharing the intimacies of sleeping, dreaming and waking. The laughing they felt to be the result of the crying (because of the line sequence) and this implied cruelty on the part of the male protagonist.

Wherever there is a disputed interpretation, linguistic analysis should provide the answer. The second group argues that the word choices (*I* and *He* instead of *some, others*: *dream* instead of *eat*) and line sequence (instead of each couplet being one line, implying simultaneity) supported their interpretation. The first group could not counter their arguments and had to agree.

Native speaker intuition played no part in this analysis - interpretations had to be supported by reference to the text. A learnable technique for all students.

Cont. ▶

Simile and metaphor poems can be similarly treated.

Friendship is an icecream
Everyone wants it
It's sweet to taste
But it melts away

The contrast of the last line here is signalled by *but* rather than any break in the structure or sound pattern.

Simile and metaphor involve two images. The second should be unexpected but with a similarity or similarities which give a new clarity to, or some insight into, the symbolism of the poem.

In Judith Wright's *The Killer,* she opens her poem with two similes:

The day was as clear as fire
the birds sang frail as glass,

Although there are similarities between a clear day and fire (heat, bright colours), it is not a conventional comparison, and there are connotations of possible danger. Similarly, the fragility of the birdsong/glass suggests the potential for violent shattering of the peaceful scene.

ESL students often delight you with the unexpectedness of their comparisons.

Sunlight and Moonlight

Sunlight, it is . . .
as necessary as parents
as dazzling as a diamond
as vigorous as a teenager

Moonlight, it is . . .
as calm as a grave
as beautiful as a precious stone
as comfortable as a rocking chair.

Michelle

I suggested to Michelle that *precious stone* was a bit general - perhaps an opal? I also suggested changing the line order. But she decided to stay with her original. Teachers sometimes say that they don't feel you should suggest changes, that you should accept whatever the student does. I disagree, but I do believe that, once you have offered suggestions (backed up by sound technical reasons), it is the student's right to decide the final version of the poem.

Critiques

Having introduced students to poetry writing, and some of the conventions of poetry, as well as the all-important patterning, and having evaluated some of their poetry, it is time to introduce other poems for criticism.

We Real Cool

The choice again will depend on many factors, including the constraints of set poems and lack of time in the classroom. I have chosen *We Real Cool* by Gwendolen Brooks (Allison et al, 1975:572) because its surface simplicity allows linguistic analytical techniques to be displayed clearly.

We Real Cool

The Pool Players

Seven at the Golden Shovel

1 We real cool. We
2 Left school. We
3 Lurk late. We
4 Strike straight. We

5 Sing sin. We
6 Thin gin. We

7 Jazz June. We
8 Die soon.

The first unexpected element is the *We* at the ends of lines 1-7. The reader's expectation is that each line should begin with *We,* the expectation created (and destroyed) in line 1. This forces us to re-evaluate *We.* Not only is it thematised by being at the beginning of the sentence, it is highlighted by its unusual position at the end of the line, following a full stop. The pause before it for the full stop and the hesitation that invariably marks the end of a line when the poem is read, even when the clause, and the sense, continue on to the next line, gives further emphasis to *we.*

Why? What is the significance to the poem of this foregrounded *we?* In the construct of the world of the poem, *we* are the pool players, a group, a gang, never known to the reader as individuals. They choose to live as a group, sacrificing their individuality to it. The simple declarative clauses with material (doing) process in the present tense (except for *left*) are often used for stating achievements - for boasting. The chanting repetition of these short clauses supports this interpretation.

The pattern of *we* ending the lines is broken in the last line. The absence of the expected element throws the rest of the line into greater relief. *Die soon* thus becomes a stark statement of fact, semantically highlighted by the contrast with the preceding series of lighthearted statements.

The last line is foregrounded in another way, too. The first two sentences are straightforward in their language and meaning, though some ESL students might have to have *real cool* explained. The next five use alliteration and assonance in increasingly semantically obscure statements. It sounds like a children's game where each has to top the boastful statement of the other, and the language gets more and more extravagant. Not that the meaning is totally obscured, but the reader has to work harder at *We thin gin* and *We jazz June* than at *We lurk late* and *We strike straight.* Then comes the last line with contrastively simple *We die soon.* The expected rhyme is there - *June* with *soon* - for cohesion, but the alliteration/consonance element is missing in *die,* which is therefore foregrounded.

Cont. ▶

The tenor of this last sentence contrasts with the rest of the poem too. It does not sound like a statement that the speakers in the poem would make. It is more like authorial comment, another contrast and break in the pattern.

Contrast can be found everywhere, if your linguistic parameters are wide enough. In poetry, we must look for significant contrast, that is, contrast which is foregrounded by a number of different linguistic features, as I did with *we* and *die*. These will be significant for the second level meanings - and the theme of the poem. A mother tongue speaker might come to the conclusions based on intuition and other experiences with poetry. The ESL learner can come to the same conclusions through linguistic analysis.

The Not-So-Good Earth

We Real Cool is an obvious example of patterning. Linguistic analysis works just as well on the less obvious, for example, Bruce Dawe's *The Not-So-Good Earth*.

Native speaker intuition would probably conclude that the speaker and his family didn't really care about the plight of the Chinese peasant families. The ESL student can come to the same conclusion by linguistic analysis. (Try it yourself first, before reading the critique below.)

The first indication is the thematisation. If we examine the subjects of each clause, we find the majority involve the Australian family: - *we, Uncle Billy, He, Dad*. The theme is "that with which the clause is concerned" (Halliday, 1985:38), so the speaker in this poem is more concerned with his/her own family's viewpoint than with the suffering of the Chinese peasants. Even when the subject of the clause is *Grandmother* (l.16), it is preceded by *If I remember rightly*, which again puts the emphasis on the speaker, not the spoken about.

The lack of concern is also shown in the transferred epithet in line 1, *25-inch Chinese peasant families*. This technique breaks the expected language pattern that adjectives used before the noun describe that noun.

The unexpectedness makes us think about what *25-inch* does describe - the TV screen as line 2 emphasises with a repetition of the phrase. The effect, the second-level meaning, is to diminish not only in size but also in importance, the image on the screen. It also has a dehumanising effect. The figures on the screen are seen as part of the TV set, divorced from reality and in the control of the viewer who uses the contrast knob to *bring them up dark* (l.18) and later wipes out 600 million Chinese without a trace (ll.24, 25) by tripping and pulling out the plug.

Lexical chaining is a tool for making explicit that attitude of the narrator of the poem. The *them* referred to in l.8 is *all those screaming faces and bodies going under the horses' hooves*. (Notice how they are still not referred to as people, just bodies and parts of bodies). A later back reference is *that bit*, again in terms of the TV show, and not the reality behind the image.

Linguistic analysis also reveals a pattern of placing descriptive phrases ambiguously in the structure of the poem. The position of *in comfort* implies that it describes *famishing* (l.2), a contradiction in terms. The phrase obviously describes the viewers. Its unexpected reference makes the reader consider the norm *watching in comfort* giving rise to questions about the ethics of watching the sufferings of others, or, at the thematic level, the ethics of some nations being so much better off than others.

There are many other examples of ambiguous positioning in the text [eg. *neat as a whistle* (l.19)] and unexpected attributes (eg, *inscrutable face* (l.23)], the cumulative effect of which allows the reader to make the statement about theme, but this time the statement is based on linguistic analysis.

Shakespeare et al.

Older students faced with Shakespeare, Keats, Shelley and the like have a more difficult task, as the structure and the lexis of language of the writers' times differ from current usage. The ESL student can have a real problem with *Hail to thee, blithe Spirit? Bird thou never wert.* (P.B. Shelley: *To a Skylark.*) Archaic and heavily figurative language needs a lot of preteaching and paraphrasing, but most ESL teachers are familiar with this aspect of poetry teaching.

However, the mini-genres of poetry, eg, the sonnet, can be more easily grasped if the student is used to thinking in terms of patterning, which is what a formal rhyme scheme, rhythm and setting out are. As in the other genres, the patterning is a unifying device, and changes in the pattern foreground something significant. In the Shakespearian sonnet, the change in the rhyme scheme from the octave to the sextet marks a change in the focus, an additional marker being a connective like *then, but, yet* and *so*. Similarly, the change in the rhythm pattern from eg,

> So long as men can breathe

to

> So long lives this

serves to foreground these important words, the crux of the poem. The alliteration also contributes to this effect.

Another example of lexical chaining is in Judith Wright's *The Killer:*

Cont. ►

111

The day was clear as fire
the birds sang frail as glass
when thirsty I came to the creek
and fell by its side in the grass

My breast on the bright moss
and shower-embroidered weeds,
my lips to the live water
I saw him turn in the reeds

Black horror sprang from the dark
in a violent birth,
and through its cloth of grass
I felt the clutch of earth.

O beat him into the ground
O strike him till he dies -
or else your life itself
drains through those colourless eyes.

I struck again and again
Slender in black and red
he lies, and his icy glance
turns outward, clear and dead.

But nimble my enemy
as water is, or wind.
He has slipped from his death aside
and vanished into my mind.

He vanished whence he came,
my nimble enemy;
and the ants come out to the snake
and drink at his shallow eye.

A lexical chain of *him, black horror, him, he, his, my enemy, he, he, he, he, my nimble enemy, the snake* and *his* shows how the snake is not explicitly mentioned until the second last line. The juxtaposition of the vanishing enemy *who has slipped from his death aside* and the dead snake shows very clearly that the reader cannot simply equate the enemy with the snake. The lack of referent for *he* through most of the poem reinforces this ambivalence, thus helping the reader to realise the snake is a symbol for fear which can never be killed.

To Sum Up

I am not attempting to deny the necessity of studying a poem for its surface meaning, allusions and connotations. What I am saying is that this is only the beginning, not the end, of critical analysis. The next step is linguistic analysis looking at such aspects as thematisation, lexical chaining, tense selection, mood, modality, setting out . . . where these are significant to the second level of meaning of the poem. Such significance can be found in contrast, where an established pattern of expectation is broken and this contrast can be lexical, structural or phonological. By a double decoding process, the reader arrives at symbolic meanings and eventually, the theme. Such an approach will help ESL students as well as benefit the mother tongue speakers by giving them a means to articulate their intuitions. The resulting ability of all students to understand and appreciate poetry will help make it the intellectually and emotionally satisfying experience it should be.

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This article is adapted from a paper given at the QATESOL 1989 Conference *Babies and Bathwater: Trends in TESOL* in Brisbane and published in the *Conference Proceedings* Volume 2.

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Teaching Literature to ESL Students

Alan Williams argues that Literature, particularly the study of novels, is an aspect of mainstream curriculum that causes considerable difficulty for ESL students. Yet there are good reasons for including work on literary texts in both mainstream and ESL study undertaken by our students. This article looks at how this can be done effectively and why it should be done.

Why?

Reasons for involving our ESL students in the study of literature in English, whether in ESL or mainstream classes include: access to familiar or shared experiences and ideas that confirm our students own life experiences; access to new experiences and ideas that broaden our students' understanding of the world; models of effective use of English as a means of communicating ideas and information; access to insights into the culture, values and traditions of native speakers of English; a context in which to develop the analytical and study skills of our students; the possibility of introducing them to reading in English as a pleasurable recreational activity; the work on this area of the syllabus in an ESL context should make such work in mainstream classes more accessible to them.

It is also worth bearing in mind that ESL students, especially older learners, may well have been introduced to the formal study of literature in their first language, but that the way in which this is approached can be radically different in different cultures. (The continued study and reading of literature in the student's first language should be encouraged and assisted where possible, as a means of maintaining both the student's first language and their cultural identity.) The extent to which these goals are achieved will depend on the type of literature chosen for study, and the way in which such study is undertaken.

The Difficulties

ESL students, along with some of their native-speaking peers, experience a range of difficulties in their study of literature that includes: difficult and unfamiliar language and stylistic devices; unfamiliar contexts; difficulty in appreciating the setting and cultures of the characters; seeing the characters and events depicted in the work as representative of ideas, attitudes, themes and values; rejection of a work which they see as challenging or undermining their values and/or culture; not understanding what is involved in a study of work.

The most daunting problem, especially in the study of a novel, is the level of the language in the work. The danger is that ESL students studying literature will be so absorbed in trying to follow the meaning, at the level of the plot, that they will not be involved in analysis of the work.

What Literature

Literature comes in all shapes and sizes. The choice of what is suitable literature for a formal study will depend on the purposes of the study. The following criteria are particularly relevant for ESL students.

1. The *accessibility* of a work for the students. This includes: the linguistic and stylistic complexity of the work; the distance of the setting of the work from the experiences and knowledge of the students; the extent to which the students may identify with or feel alienated by the ideas and values presented in the work.
2. The extent to which students will *identify* with the work, and find it representing things which they understand and have experienced, and the extent to which it introduces them to new ideas.
3. The links that a work may have to either other areas of the curriculum, or the life experiences of the students.
4. The form of the work - novel, short story, poem, "classic", abridged or graded reader, and so on. The use of abridged versions and graded readers may help solve the problem of language difficulties, but can easily create other problems. These texts are usually reductions of the original that include little more than a summary of the plot, devoid of the characterisation and exploration of themes and ideas that are the essence of a study. Care should be taken, lest we send our students looking for something that isn't there.

Some Approaches to the Task

In undertaking a study of a text with ESL students, the difficulties can be controlled by requiring the students to handle only a limited number of tasks at a time.

1. *Reduce the difficulty of works encountered first.*
   - study short stories before novels
   - study works that confirm students' experiences before works that go beyond their experience.
   (Though don't neglect these when students are ready for them.)
2. *Reduce the danger of students being submerged in following the text.*
   - show the video prior to reading the novel, as well as at the end.
   - present the story line in some form, prior to reading the work. For example, students can sequence pictures which summarise the plot, role play key incidents before they read.

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3. *Increase the students' sense of identification with a work.*
   - pre-teach about the history, time, place and culture in which the work is set.
   - get students role-playing and solving problem situations in the work.
   - discuss similar or related experiences of the students.
   - be thoughtful in your choice of text.

As your students become more familiar with what is involved in the study of a work you can progressively increase the complexity of their study and move into texts that deal with settings and issues that take your students beyond their own experiences.

Some Suitable Classroom Activities

The following activities can enrich and extend the study of a work:

- Discuss the cover of the book (and any other illustrations) prior to reading, to give the students a feeling of what the work is about.
- Get the students to draw maps, time-lines of places and events depicted.
- Get the students to convert obscure or difficult passages to everyday English.
- Students report to the rest of the class (in pairs or individually) about a chapter or section of the text.
- Students read a self-selected extract to the class and explain their choice of that passage.
- Students re-tell or re-write a section or incident from one character's point of view.
- Students role-play key incidents.
- Discussion of chapters
  (a) How has the situation changed in this chapter?
  (b) What are the key events in this chapter?
  (c) Why did the author make it happen that way?
- After discussion, students write alternative endings (happier, sadder or shorter).
- Students sequence true/false statements to build up the story so far, or say or write their own summaries.
- Students are asked to agree or disagree with evaluative/interpretative statements about the work, and give reasons for their answers.
- Discussion of why the author included a particular character or used a particular setting.
- Reports and discussion. Suitable questions include: What I liked/didn't like about the work (with reasons), Would you recommend it to a friend? (Why/Why not?), What did you learn from the work?
- Talking books of the text, for the students to follow while reading.
- The following table presents a very useful format that enables the class to build up a summary as they read each chapter or section.

Chapter	Plot	Setting	Characters	Theme/Idea
1				
2				
etc.				

This table can be completed as a task for either the whole class, or the responsibility delegated to smaller groups or individual students for certain sections.

The study of a text, whether it is a short story, a poem, a novel or a play can be an exciting and valuable learning experience for ESL students. By thinking carefully about what is involved in such a study for our students, and by thinking creatively about how best to involve the students in this study, we can ensure that our students don't get lost in such a task.

Further Ideas

You will find some more ideas in:

Collie, J and Slater, S 1987, *Literature in the Language Classroom* Cambridge University Press

Duff, A and Maley, A 1990, *Literature* Oxford University Press

Greenwood, J 1988, *Class Readers* Oxford University Press

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For further discussion of the thinking behind this article, see

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Strategies for Teaching Literature to ESL Students

The following teaching strategies were stimulated by Alan Williams' approach and focus on Theodore Taylor's novel* The Cay. *The intended learners are advanced level ESL learners in secondary school.

Activities assume that students are familiar with reading a range of pieces - for example, newspaper articles, short stories and possibly other texts.

Choice of Novel

This particular novel was chosen because it is taught frequently in mainstream English classes at approximately year 8. The novel is not excessively long (105 pages - five or six pages for each of its eighteen chapters). The plot has some similarities with the better known *Lord of the Flies,* that is, survival on an isolated island, but without the horror of Golding's excellent novel. Wider themes which are raised in the novel are war, dislocation, danger/survival, racial prejudice and personal growth. For many students these themes may represent confirmation of their own experiences thus providing an easier framework than if the world of the novel was totally alien. The language used should not present major difficulties for relatively advanced ESL students, although the written record of the West Indies accented speech of one of the main characters may present a minor challenge for the teacher.

Pre-reading

Pre-reading activities are equivalent to the elicitation stage in an ESL lesson. The aim is to explore the extent of topic knowledge and information held by members of the class and bring these out to enable all to share. In addition there is the intention of assisting students to predict by introducing the topic, the vocabulary and concepts before students start reading, thus providing a secure semantic framework.

Pre-reading activities for *The Cay* could include the following:

Reading for specific information (to anticipate the novel setting, and much of the vocabulary). A whole class discussion focusing on what would be required for survival if lost at sea - the teacher would make a blackboard note of students' responses under three headings (*known, not sure, questions to be answered*). The aim of the discussion would be to bring out as much as possible of the general knowledge of the students, and classroom strategies at this stage should encourage student discussion. Students would then be given a short text such as a relevant newspaper article, with the objective of reading to gain answers to any questions still unanswered. It would be necessary that students be aware they are reading for specific information only and time allowed should be limited to emphasise this. Further discussion would attempt to answer the class questions.

Visual Response

Book covers provide potential readers with information. Students may be encouraged to predict by the use of a worksheet which uses a copy of the novel's cover illustration and a series of open-ended questions. Students should be encouraged to discuss and consider a variety of possible answers to these questions - and should be reassured that there is no right/wrong answer!

Map Locations

There is some reference in the novel to geographical locations and the specialised terms of latitude and longitude. These terms could be anticipated through a lesson on map reading (using students' countries of origin) and some attention should be given to the countries around the Caribbean - use could be made of any specialised knowledge of any central or South American students in the class.

Reading

Chapters 1 and 2 would benefit from fairly close study in class. Possible language difficulties may occur with the Dutch place names and it may be wise for students to listen to either the teacher or a prepared tape of these two chapters rather than have students attempt to read aloud at this stage.

Later chapters could be read by a combination of at-home and in-class reading. A variety of worksheets and teaching strategies can help keep students' attention and interest during this stage.

Plot Summaries

- Students are given several alternative plot summaries (prepared by the teacher) and discussion would focus on which most accurately summarised the section just read.
- Particularly helpful as an aid to at-home reading is a worksheet with a series of sentences which summarises (out of order) the main events in the chapter - students are required to order the sentences correctly. (Add in the occasional false sentence for variety!)
- Prepare a summary sheet which requires students to 'complete the sentence'.
- True/false sentences require students to re-read for information and meaning.

Anticipate difficult or unknown vocabulary in the next chapter and provide either some pre-teaching or guidance on predicting from context.

Stop at various dramatic stages (for example in *The Cay*, when Phillip and his mother board the SS Hato, when Phillip finds himself on the raft, just before the full force of the hurricane strikes . . .) of the novel and encourage students to predict what will happen next. If particular language needs exist practice worksheets could be developed to meet this need. A worksheet on prediction might use the language of consequence *If x happened, then y would / could / might . . . .*

Characters. There are two main characters in the novel and imaginative use could be made of role play. Students' knowledge of body language and the importance of stress for an understanding of the speakers' emotion could be extended through dramatic re-enactment of several sections of the novel. Students may find it helpful to explore body language through watching a video (this would not

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need to be specific to the novel) without sound and discussing the character's possible emotions based on their observations of gestures, expression, stance and so on.

Understanding of Timothy's Caribbean accent and speech patterns may benefit from students having the chance to listen to a similar accent (extensive pre-planning would be necessary to obtain this). Depending on students' interest and previous teaching strategies, discussion of Timothy's speech could be undertaken against a background framework of phonetics.

Setting. The description of the island is quite detailed and students may wish to prepare a drawing, map or even papier mache model of the island using the narrator's description. Some use may be made of the measurements given to try and achieve a scale model. (This exercise may make use of art and maths lessons.)

Students' imaginative written work. A variety of strategies may be used to encourage students to record in writing their responses to their reading.

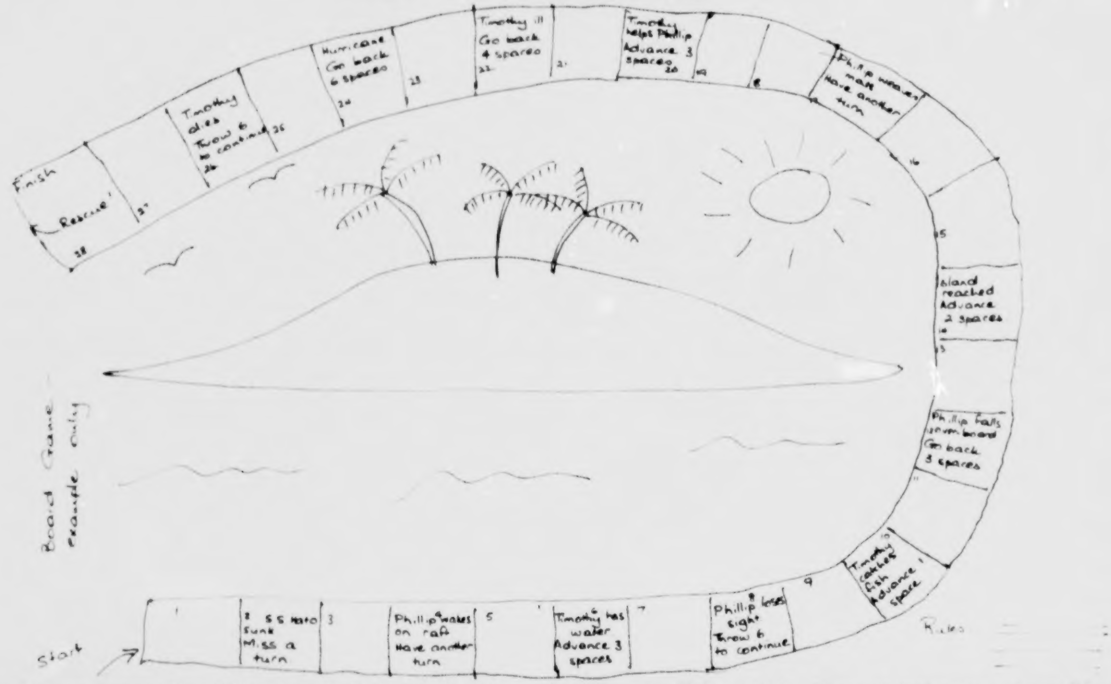
Joanne Collie and Stephen Slater suggest (1988 p123), among other ideas, that students may use the novel's vocabulary to write a tanka (Japanese 5 line, 31 syllable poem) bringing out a theme or exploring a character from the novel.

Other students may choose to keep a diary as if they were one of the main characters from *The Cay*. Students could be encouraged to keep their entries brief, but be asked to justify why their character would record responses in a particular way.

Post-Reading Activities

Post reading activities may be undertaken through a variety of methods - and students appreciate being given the opportunity to choose which method they would like. The following are some activities: chapter titles : in *The Cay* chapters are numbered without a title. Students could prepare appropriate titles; newspaper article: students may prepare a newspaper article for the Willemstad paper regarding Phillip's rescue; games: various games may be prepared including a board game. This activity is fairly detailed and time consuming and would require the input of several students. In addition board games are specific to particular cultures and so some introduction may be necessary.

Board Game - example only


Start
1
2 S S Hato sunk Miss a turn
3
Phillip wakes on raft Have another turn
5
Timothy has water Advance 3 spaces
7
Phillip loses sight Throw 6 to continue
9
Timothy catches fish Advance 1 space
Phillip falls from board Go back 3 spaces
Island reached Advance 2 spaces
15
16
Phillip weaves mat Have another turn
Timothy helps Phillip Advance 3 spaces
21
Timothy ill Go back 4 spaces
23
Hurricane Go back 6 spaces
Timothy dies Throw 6 to continue
Rescue!
Finish
Board Game example only
Rules

Additional resources: the following includes helpful ideas for the teaching of literature. Specifically aimed at ESL teaching:

Collie, J. and Slater, S. 1988, *Literature in the Language Classroom: A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities*, Cambridge University Press (An excellent resource book with an extensive range of useful, practical ideas. Includes a detailed list of literature suitable for using with ESL students)

Greenwood, J 1988, *Class Readers*, Oxford (Packed full of excellent suggestions for practical, interesting classroom ideas, noting appropriate language level, Appendix summarises 22 readers suitable for using with students.)

Harmer, J 1983, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, Longman Chapter 9. (Many useful suggestions using general reading materials, eg newspaper articles, advertisements)

Holden, S (Ed.) 1980, *Second Selections from Modern English Teacher*, Longman Chapter 3 (Helpful suggestions for classroom activities including pre-reading exercises, worksheets, cloze exercises, and the use of other reading material eg newspapers)

Moorwood, H (Ed.) 1980, *Selections from Modern English Teacher* Longman Chapter 5 (Classroom activities with suggestions of a variety of interesting ways of presenting material)

For information on recommended approaches to current mainstream literature strategies, refer:

Protherough, R 1986, *Developing Response to Fiction* Open University Press (Many of the suggestions would adapt to be suitable for ESL students.)

Theodore Taylor *The Cay* is available as a Puffin Book edition published by Penguin in 1973 and since reprinted.

Springboard to Literacy: The Use of Subtitled Video and the Genre of Traditional Stories

In recognition of the international Year of Literacy, Janine Resch and Val Moss undertook action research using subtitled video and the traditional story as a Springboard to Literacy for an On Arrival class of advanced adult students.

They devised a series of lessons, each sharply focused on a relevant writing style or genre, ie, dramatic monologue, dialogue, narrative, review, story. A high level of student involvement and considerable English language development was indicated by their analysis at the end of each session and confirmed by the students' summative evaluation.

In the Introduction Janine discusses the aims, rationale and staging of the project. The session on the writing of Review and Criticism provided a stimulating conclusion to a series of six literacy sessions. Val gives insights into the students responses. The merits of teaching literacy in this context are discussed in the conclusions.

Aims of the Project

The aims of the project are:

a) To devise a series of literacy activities centred around the story of *Moon Sickness* from the subtitled version of the film *Kaos*, directed by the Taviani brothers.

b) To consciously involve the internal schema of the individual student in the language learning experiences, by focusing on this classic traditional story by Pirandello.

Rationale

In stage I of this project, entitled *The Fairy Tale Genre in the Teaching of Reading* it became clear that reading skills were accelerated by involving the internal schema of the learner. The set of acquired beliefs, feelings and knowledge that the learner brings to the learning experience enabled rapid acquisition of new language through recognition of a universal theme, identification with underlying concepts and prediction of the inherent structure and linear sequence of events.

While Stage I focused on an individual student, learning to read through a series of lessons centred on a written/illustrated text, Stage II was extended to a class of advanced students developing reading and writing strategies through a series of lessons centred on a subtitled video.

Video is a powerful medium which introduces contemporary technology into the classroom and provides a rich context and stimulus for language acquisition.

The story of *Moon Sickness* from the film *Kaos* was selected because it is a classic tale, mirroring the inherent patterns of the genre of myth; because of the adult storyline, portraying characters exhibiting a range of complex emotions; and because the reduced language of subtitles, which although simple and direct with the familiar collocations of its genre, masks provocative concepts.

With the intention of using parts of the film as a springboard into literacy, we sought to devise a series of lessons, each one sharply focused on a relevant writing style or genre, i.e. dramatic monologue, narrative, review writing, story telling.

Transcribing the Text

When we viewed *Moon Sickness* in order to transcribe the spoken language of the subtitles, it was evident that a description of the unspoken visual drama was essential for a complete text. The narrative form interspersed with dialogue would tell the story independently of the video.

In writing this narrative I was careful to complement the subtitled dialogue in style and level of vocabulary; to tell the story simply and sympathetically as a traditional tale. No attempt was made to interpret the actions of the characters or infer meaning for effective evaluation. The completely transcribed text was then divided into four episodes of similar lengths (10-15 minutes video).

Each episode introduced a different character, a new complication in the story and ended with suspense or intrigue, thereby providing a stimulus for predicting and following part. We then analysed each episode for content and style of language as a basis for discussion, teaching points, reading and writing activities.

Staging the Project

After negotiating time with an advanced class of On-Arrival students and their teacher for a two and a quarter-hour period of six consecutive Thursdays, we drafted our program:

Week 1: The Traditional Story Genre.
Introducing the theme of the video/story.
Retelling and individual writing of stories, with a similar theme.
Week 2: The Narrative Form.
Viewing Part 1 of *Moon Sickness*.
Reading and group writing of the narrative form.
Week 3: The Dramatic Monologue.
Viewing Part II of the video.
Reading and individual writing of a dramatic monologue.
Week 4: The Dialogue.
Viewing Part III of the video.
Reading and group writing of dialogues.
Week 5: Writing a Sequel.
Viewing Part IV of video.
Reading and individual writing of a sequel.
Week 6: Writing a Review.
Viewing entire video (50 minutes)
Reading model reviews. Writing a review.

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Summative Evaluation

Devise suitable evaluation form for individual assessment of project. Make time for informal evaluative class discussion.

Conclusions

As language teachers we were challenged and stimulated by this action research project.

Students' evaluation indicated a high level of involvement and samples of their written work demonstrated considerable language development. Indeed their response was more positive than we had anticipated. High attendance (100%) throughout six sessions reflected this involvement. This led us to question ourselves, and the students in a follow up evaluation discussion, as to why the project was so satisfying. The conclusions are discussed in the following areas:

Video as a Teaching Tool

Video provides a powerful context for language learning in itself. This particular story from the film *Kaos* with its compelling drama, visual beauty and haunting music, was potent. Students were quickly caught up in the series of complex issues that were presented in simple language and structures of the familiar traditional story genre. Linguistically speaking the film was highly context embedded yet cognitively undemanding. Subtitles, using reduced language, were picked up by the students with relative ease. Implicit meaning was made explicit through the drama.

Video is one step away from life and distances the viewer in a way that allows for analysis of sociocultural and sociolinguistic features. It provides a focus on interactional language, which is more accessible to the second language learner, yet lends itself to creating opportunities for more academic language ie, review writing.

The Genre of the Traditional Story

Moon Sickness is a classic example of dramatised oral tradition. The universality of the theme and the underlying structure of this genre may be consciously or unconsciously recognised by the language learner. The fact that an internal schema of the individual is mirrored in a traditional story is widely accepted. The meaning the learner constructs from such a text draws on both this internalised system of beliefs and feelings and the externalised story. Interpretations of a simple linear text gave rise to lively discussions and posed complex questions, which in turn provided a stimulus for reading and writing.

The Class Profile

The students in this particular class, with an ASLPR oral proficiency of between 3.5 - 5.0 were challenged by the activities designed to support the video. The language of the transcribed text presented little difficulty, in terms of vocabulary and structures, yet the complexity of interpretations gave rise to demanding language learning tasks.

The students also expressed their appreciation of the adult nature of the content; the adult emotions and dilemmas it portrayed.

Literacy in Context: The Macro-Skills

The interdependence of the macro skills, bound by the visual drama of the video, was fundamental to the success of this project.

The interplay of visuals without subtitles and again with subtitles; text supported by dramatic action and transcribed with a narrative; the same language recycled through the spoken word and the written word; the same ideas elaborated through discussion and developed through reading and writing, all strongly reinforced language learning.

The macro skills were engaged in a series of different combinations designed to construct meaning from the story.

Speaking in Context

Over the six sessions a wealth of spoken English was demanded by a variety of tasks - prescribed and spontaneous:

- Brainstorming cultural concepts, stories and traditions.
- Retelling stories, traditions, rituals and beliefs.
- Discussing the feelings, predicaments, dilemmas, consequences of possible action of each of the characters.
- Interpreting concepts and action portrayed through the drama, with and without subtitles.
- Comparing and analysing individual interpretations and levels of meaning derived from the story.
- Questioning motives of the characters.
- Predicting the next sequel.
- Analysing the structure of model reviews.
- Evaluation discussions at the end of the project.

Reading in Context

After viewing the video with or without subtitles, students were engaged in a series of reading activities which negated or confirmed their interpretation of the visual drama.

Motivation to read the transcribed text was high. A few students had chosen to take notes when viewing, which they were able to compare with the transcript.

- Reading of Subtitles on video screen.
- Reading transcript of subtitled dialogue and narrative.
- Reading text in small discussion groups.
- Skimming for main ideas.
- Scanning for detail.
- Predicting action or emotion of character.
- Reading in character (play reading).
- Reading aloud around the group.
- Group sharing of miscue analysis.
- Individual silent reading for interpretation.
- Reading for analysis of style, structure, format, language (i.e. review).
- Form reading (for evaluation).
- Reading of students' texts from individual and group writing sessions.

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Writing in Context

The writing sessions preceded by the language stimulus of the video, discussion and reading activities, although demanding, gave notable satisfaction to the students. Highly motivated by the content, they had something to say and were confident enough to write in a small group situation. Students compared their versions, complemented each other on their development skills and when invited to, criticised positively. Writing groups, composed of one teacher and seven students, provided a supportive environment.

Worksheets with the writing activities clearly set out were valuable from the teacher's point of view, enabling the group to focus more sharply on the task.

Over the six sessions students concentrated on a particular writing style or genre:

- Genre of the traditional story.
- Interpreting the dialogue in narrative form.
- Writing imaginative individual monologues.
- Writing imaginative dialogues in groups.
- Character writing or sequel writing.
- Writing personal critiques or reviews.

The writing sessions were structured in a way that they progressed from less complex to more complex models and activities. The skills required to complete the writing tasks were varied:

- transcribing;
- note taking;
- transposing direct to indirect speech;
- transposing narrative to dialogue form;
- predicting;
- modelling;
- drafting;
- writing individually;
- writing collaboratively.

Students commented, in the informal evaluative discussion, that there was insufficient time given to writing sessions. Forty minutes were provided for the first draft, but many students expressed a need for a follow-up session. We therefore recommend that teachers using this material program time for writing a second draft at a later date.

Teacher-Student Ratio

We were fortunate to have either two or three teachers for a class of 21 students when carrying out this research. This allowed for a teacher-student ratio of 1:10 when viewing and discussing the video and 1:7 when involved in literacy tasks.

Although this material was designed for an On-Arrival class with one teacher, we highly recommend that a support teacher be engaged for the delivery of the reading and writing sessions.

Students' Evaluation

Students were in agreement that the Review writing and Traditional Story writing sessions were the most valuable. They rated these sessions as 1 (excellent) and 2 (very good). They were also in agreement the Dialogue, Monologue and Sequel writing sessions as 3 (average) and one student as 4 (uninteresting). Attendance (100% was consistently high for all six sessions. Students' comments of "something different", "very interesting", "Something to look forward to" and "So exciting, I can't wait" reassured us of the merits of the project.

Appendix

A Sample Lesson - Session V - *Moon Sickness*

Outline

Objectives	*Language Elements*	*Skills and Strategies*	*Activities*	*Resources*
• To develop literacy in the context of the story/video. • To introduce the genre of film review. • To evaluate the approach to teaching literacy.	Genre of review and criticism.	*Speaking* Brainstorming Discussing *Writing* Note taking Review writing *Reading* Skim Reading for components/ structure of a review *Assessing the* project	*Reading* In groups, read model review. Analyse structure *Viewing* Note details on task sheet and individual interpretation of the film. *Writing* (individually) - see writing worksheet. *Speaking* Analysing model review.	• Complete video of *Moon Sickness* • Task sheet • Writing activity sheet • Model review • Evaluation forms

Cont. ▶

Time Allocation

30 minutes

Reading model review from *The Sydney Morning Herald;* eliciting components of the review genre. (Group Activity)

60 minutes

Viewing the film *Moon Sickness*. Taking notes as on task sheet. (Class activity)

30 minutes

Writing activity (individual). See worksheet.

15 minutes

Evaluation of method of teaching literacy.

Task Sheet

When viewing this film please note the following:

Title:
Director's name:
Genre of film:
Setting: (People, place, time.)
Story line:
Characters:
Cinematography:
Music:
Tone:
Comparisons: (with other films).

Writing Activity

Using the notes you have taken, write a review for the *Telegraph*. (Length: 200 words).

Your purpose may be to persuade or dissuade the public from going to see the film.

Session Description

The main focus of this session was to be the quite demanding task of writing a review of the film. Students were thoroughly challenged by the preparatory step of reading a sample film review published in that day's *Sydney Morning Herald.*

In small groups they discussed the popularity and place of review of films, theatre, concerts, etc. in their own countries, and were fascinated to hear from a Polish student that film reviews were the most popular literary form in Poland, as access to the movies/videos themselves is almost impossible.

After skim reading, the students extracted the components of a review from the sample, and discussed the ways in which these were ordered and interwoven to interest, inform and tantalise the reader without revealing everything. In discussing those components, new vocabulary was explained including: *director, performance, theme, cinematography, objectivity / subjectivity, credibility, perspective.*

The students then discussed *Moon Sickness*, using the structure and basis of the sample review as a springboard. Comparisons were made between the purpose, style affect and so on of the two films (*The Sydney Morning Herald* review was *Mo Better Blues* - a film about a jazz musician). They were able to give opinions, assess, compare and make recommendations with a pleasing degree of confidence.

This was the final part of the preparation for the writing task which the groups began in a quiet atmosphere. It was obvious that the sophistication of the review format provided a stimulating challenge at this level. Not long after starting some students began to lament the limitations of the time in which they were to finish, and of their English vocabulary. It was obvious that they regarded the production of this review as the culmination of the sessions, and went about it with earnestness and determination. Some students worked to complete their reviews at home as they felt they could not do justice to the task and their own ability in the time available.

The finished products were as delightful, provocative and varied as the class itself. All showed a good understanding of the use of objective and subjective expression of the language of opinion and criticism, and of the appropriate use for best effect of different types of sentence structure.

This article was presented as a paper at the ACTA/ ATESOL Summer School in Sydney in January 1991.

Janine Resch is Assistant Principal (acting) with AMES, Campsie, NSW. Her particular interest is traditional stories to develop literacy. She has written and produced in this genre for SBS.

Val Moss is a teacher with AMES, Mary Street, Surrey Hills, NSW. This research reflects her keen interest and experience in teaching language and literature.

PGR : Process Genre Recommended

Paul Learmonth recounts his use of elements of both process and genre approaches to teaching writing to adult ESL learners.

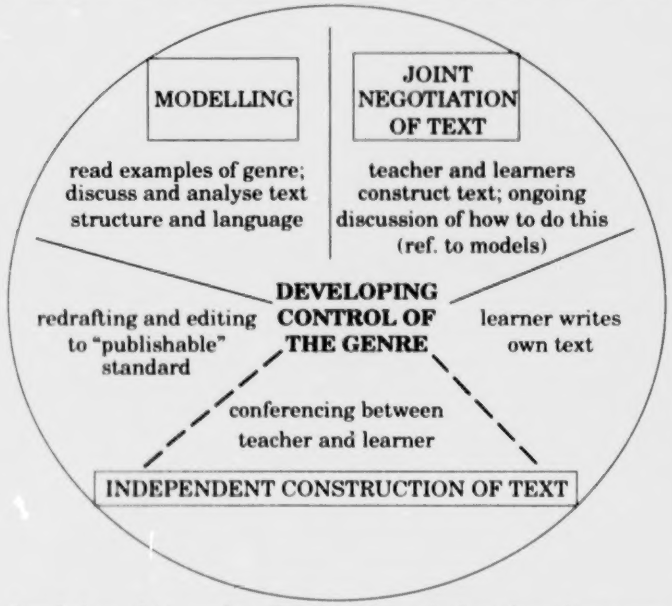
When teaching writing to adult ESL learners in AMEP General English classes, which focus on the concurrent development of all four macro-skills, I have found a version of the process approach effective. Learners have shown an increased awareness of surface errors and have become more self-analytical and self-directed in their writing. But transferring this approach to a specific-focus Reading and Writing group highlighted some gaps. The learners appeared to be unaware that the texts they were producing did not always meet the expectations of the reader. They needed to learn that written language needs to be culturally appropriate within a given context. Although this group came from a variety of cultural and academic backgrounds, they all needed to develop their writing skills for the real world - either in the workplace or for further education.

The task confronting me then was to incorporate the elements from my process approach that had helped to increase learners' skills with an approach that would make learners aware of the need for written English to be appropriate to its context. In this article, I will present an account of how a writing approach that used elements of both process and genre increased learners' understanding, responsibility, motivation, accuracy and appropriateness.

Jennifer Hammond (1989, 1990a, 1990b) and Anne Burns' (1990) genre-based work for the National Centre for English Language Training and Research (NCELTR) literacy project together with a practical workshop on writing letters of complaint, run by Merilyn Gander, Shepparton TAFE, at the AMES Victoria Curriculum Conference in February 1991 provided some useful approaches.

A teaching-learning cycle proposed by Hammond and reproduced in Figure One emphasises the importance of using a writing model which is discussed and analysed by the teacher and learners in terms of its schematic structure (what goes where) and its distinctive language feature (eg, tense). The cycle can be begun at any point but for teaching a genre for the first time, Hammond recommends beginning with the modelling stage, then jointly negotiating the writing of a text in the same genre and finally having learners construct their own independent texts.

Figure One: Teaching-Learning Cycle (Hammond 1990a)


MODELLING
JOINT NEGOTIATION OF TEXT
read examples of genre; discuss and analyse text structure and language
teacher and learners construct text; ongoing discussion of how to do this (ref. to models)
DEVELOPING CONTROL OF THE GENRE
redrafting and editing to "publishable" standard
learner writes own text
conferencing between teacher and learner
INDEPENDENT CONSTRUCTION OF TEXT

Applying this cycle, Gander found that her learners produced letters of complaint that used appropriate schematic staging and appropriate English. However, she found the need to incorporate two further elements. Firstly, she had to build an escape clause into the cycle whereby the learners could return to discussion and analysis of another model if problems occurred at any stage. Secondly, in the first two stages of the cycle, she had to build up the *field*, (see Elliott and Winser articles in this issue) that is, vocabulary and phrases relevant to the genre in question, encouraging as much variation as possible. This was considered important in order that the learners would know as much appropriate English as possible and the variations of language that can appear within any given genre.

In my reading and writing class I decided to trial a methodology using my process writing approach and a checklist and correction code but also included modelling, joint negotiation of texts and independent construction from the genre approach.

At the start of the course, the learners identified genres that they considered important to concentrate on in class. One of these was report writing. Some learners identified this as important for their work while other saw it as a pre-requisite skill for further study. I developed a unit of work to address this stated need. Because of varying interests within the group, we chose a topic which was perceived to be of interest to all the learners - a report on Myer House and its facilities.

Having agreed on the topic, the learners began by discussing the *tenor*, or audience and the purpose of the report. The real audience would be prospective Myer House students and the real purpose would be to inform them about studying English there. At this initial stage, we began to develop a joint metalanguage for the

Cont. ▶

task. As an orientation we discussed what the learners could say about Myer House - what did they know before they came? what would they have *liked* to know before they came? why Myer House? where did they get their information from? what did they know about selection processes, priorities, facilities, types of classes and so on? Information given by learners was stored on the whiteboard for later reference.

The next stage was to study a model of a report. I had a report entitled *Your First English Class* which had been produced by a previous exiting student. Presented on a overhead projector, only the title was visible at first to the learners who predicted the types of information they would expect it to contain and also the tense/s they would expect to find. We then skimmed the whole report, confirmed predictions and checked comprehension. Then we analysed the model in terms of schematic structure and language features, continuing to develop a joint metalanguage for the task.

Figure Two : Analysed Model

Your First English Class

Introduction

One of the many problems which new migrants *face* in settling down is communication skills. For people with a non-English background, some *may be interested in studying and improving their English*. Adults are able *to enrol* for Migrant English Classes at various Adult Migrant Education Centres such as the Adult Migrant Education Centre on the 3rd floor of Myer House, 250 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne 3000 (Tel. (03) 663 2781).

1. *This* centre organises classes for newcomers who would like to study English. Prior to enrolment you will be required to produce evidence of your permanent residence. An appointment will then be made for an interview. At the interview you *will be asked* some questions and participate in a conversation with the interviewer. The purpose of *this* is to test the level of your English - speaking, listening, pronunciation, reading - and place you in an appropriate class.

2. There *are* several classes *running* during the day and evening as well as Saturday morning. All the classes are free of charge. First place always goes to the person who *has been* here only a few years - especially less than three years so it is important to apply for a class as soon as possible.

3. After the interview you will receive a letter from the centre to inform you when your class will commence. *You may have to wait* until there is a vacancy but usually you have to wait until the next school term commences.

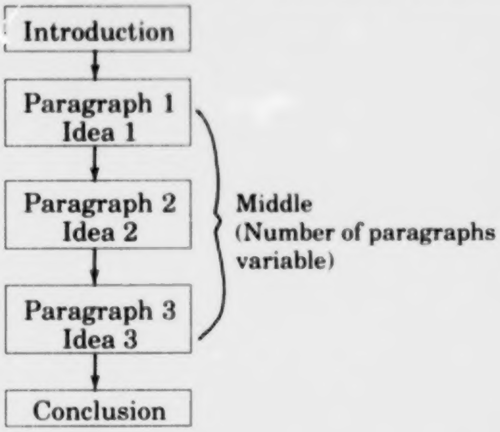
4. During the wait the individual Learning Centre is available. *It* is open from Monday to Thursday from 10.00 am to 7.00 pm and Friday from 10.00 am to 7.00 pm. On Saturday the ILC is open from 9.00 am to 12.30. *It* provides many resources and facilities for your use and teachers are there to assist you when you need help.

5. Summary Conclusion

Dieu Tran July 1990

We drew boxes around parts of the model on the overhead projector and labelled them: *introduction, middle, conclusion*. We further analysed the middle and agreed that it should be broken up into paragraphs and that each should contain one main idea. (The middle in the model had one paragraph but several main ideas.) This schematic structure was also stored on the whiteboard for later references as in Figure Three.

Figure Three : Analysis of Schematic Structure



We then discussed and analysed the language features of the model. While the learners identified the simple present tense as the major one employed by the writer, they also identified the present perfect tense and the use of future time. We discussed how and why these tenses were used in various parts of the report. We also looked at the how and why of the writer's use of reference. We then spent time on building up the field - looking at other vocabulary and alternative ways of saying things. I encouraged learners to make any notes they saw as important in helping them later. To complete the analysis stage, I asked learners how they thought they could improve on the model.

The next stage was joint negotiation of the elements to be included in our report. Working in pairs, the learners developed paragraph points to be written up, referring to the stored information on the whiteboard. Using our schematic structure (Figure Three) on the OHP, the whole class then negotiated how many boxes we needed, which points would go in which boxes, and the relationships between the ideas so that a logical sequence could be developed for the paragraphs. We further built up the field at this stage.

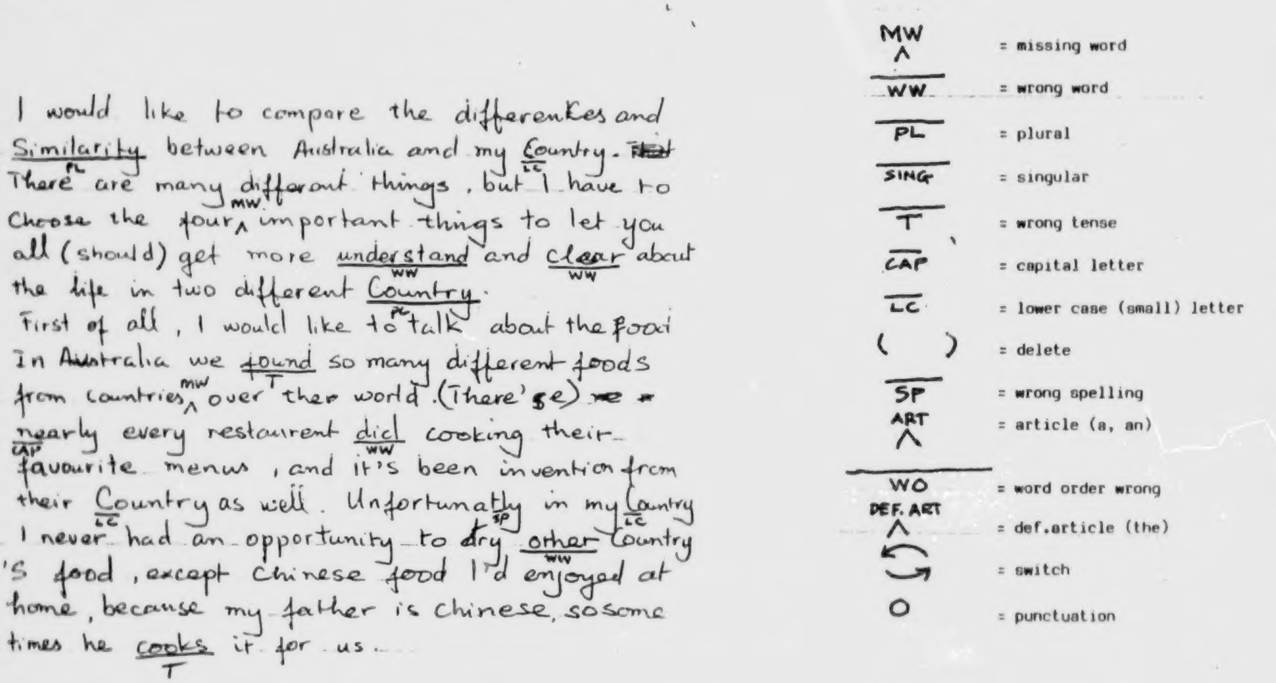
Small groups then chose one paragraph to construct, keeping audience and purpose in mind, referring to the model and to the field we had previously built up. Learners then checked these first drafts against their checklist before they were collected for correction-coding by the teacher.

Cont. ▶

Checklist points to consider relate to common group errors.

1. Verb *to be*	*is / are, was / were*
2. Plurals	*book / books, child / children*
3. Verb or noun?	*introduce / introduction*
4. Tense	
5. Missing words	*a, at, to, in, for, etc*
6. Word order	
7. Using Verb *to be* too much	*I'm came from Chile (sic)*
8. Third person *s*	
9. Anything else?	

Figure Four : Correction Coding (Example)



I would like to compare the differenkes and Similarity between Australia and my Country. ~~That~~ There are many differont things, but I have to Choose the four important things to let you all (should) get more understand and clear about the life in two different Country.
First of all, I would like to talk about the food In Australia we found so many different foods from countries over ther world. (There's e) ~~re~~ nearly every restaurent did cooking their favourite menus, and it's been invention from their Country as well. Unfortunatly in my Country I never had an opportunity to dry other Country 'S food, except Chinese food I'd enjoyed at home, because my father is Chinese, sosome times he cooks it for us...

MW ^ = missing word
WW = wrong word
PL = plural
SING = singular
T = wrong tense
CAP = capital letter
LC = lower case (small) letter
( ) = delete
SP = wrong spelling
ART ^ = article (a, an)
WO = word order wrong
DEF. ART ^ = def.article (the)
= switch
O = punctuation

By referring to the correction key code (Figure Four) groups were encouraged to self-correct their drafts as far as possible and to discuss any queries with each other and with me. (During the correction coding, I noted major recurring errors for separate, explicit language teaching tutorials.) Each group's resulting second draft was then transferred to OHPs and analysed by the whole class who suggested improvements. The groups then rewrote their drafts.

We now had third drafts covering all the points we wanted to include in paragraphs in a logical sequence. All that remained was to construct an introduction and a conclusion.

I decided to develop them as a negotiated whole class activity on the whiteboard. Two students made copies. Finally, these together with the third draft of each paragraph were given to a learner with word-processing skills to type up. Each learner received a photocopy of the finished product and multiple copies were distributed to the reception desk and to the student information stand in the student recreation area. We discussed whether the learners had achieved their purpose.

The task for learners to follow-up sessions later was to construct independently or in pairs another report on a negotiated topic, using the previous cooperatively produced report as a model. The learners worked through the same stages they had worked through before, with help where needed, for example, in building up the field.

Conclusion

Although some surface errors still occurred in the finished product, the learners produced a report that fulfilled the requirements of audience and purpose, appropriate structure and sequence and appropriate English.

The methodology allowed me to blend my previous experience in process writing with a genre approach. The use of a checklist and correction code encouraged the learners to become more self-directed and more analytical of surface errors in their own writing. The use of a model, analysis of the model, and field-building meant that the students learnt more about appropriate English structure and language features, and also to some extent about the predictability of the report genre. This methodological blend is an empowering one for learners and offers a way into formal writing. It builds learner confidence and motivation and provides a useful, rewarding learning strategy.

Cont. ▶

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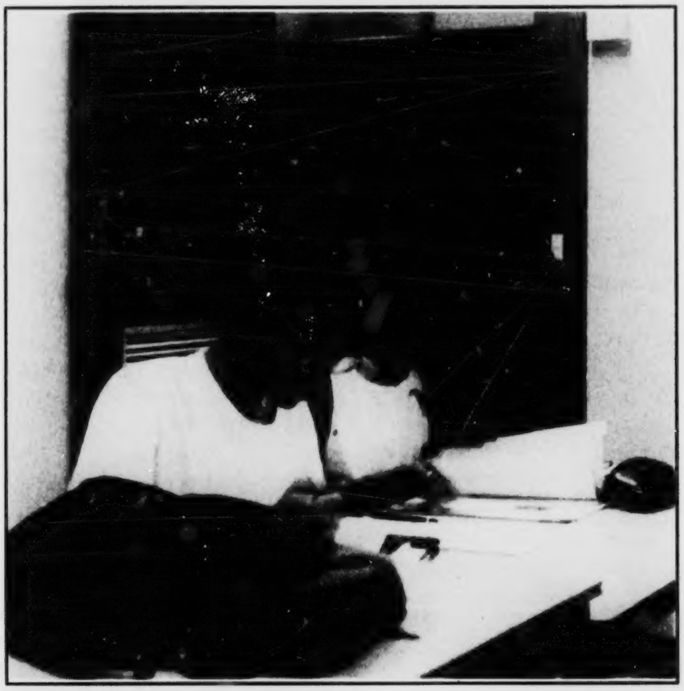

"My Essay is Consist of Many Mistake": NESB Academic Writing - Problems and Strategies

Tim Moore discusses the nature of syntactic, discourse and stylistic problems in the academic writing of NESB students and the strategies that have been used at the Language and Learning Section at Monash University to help the students develop their academic writing skills. (Included here will be discussion of the extent to which grammar check software linked to a word processor e.g. Grammatik IV is of assistance to students in editing their work). The paper will make particular reference to the work of William Rutherford.

Introduction

The Language and Learning Section at Monash University offers academic assistance to students enrolled in various undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Most of our clients are from non-English speaking backgrounds and their primary need is to improve their writing. They have received disappointing results for written assignments in their courses and have been urged by academic staff to "improve their written expression".

The main challenge for NESB writers (as it is for all writers) in an academic setting is to be able to compose texts that generally fulfil the following types of criteria: relevance to the prescribed task, coherent organisation of material, evidence of considered research. Another challenge is to be able to render such appropriate content in a grammatically accurate form. (We must bear in mind that content and meaning cannot often be so conveniently separated.)

In assessing NESB writing, some academic staff are able, to an extent, to put the grammar aside and assess a piece of work on its semantic merits. For others however, it is clear that a greater priority is placed on form and a grammatically flawed text is often thought to be unpassable (maybe impassable!) or worthy of a bare pass at best. Typical comments on assignments returned to students from these staff are "Watch your expression. Sentence construction is often poor" or "It is a pity to have your analysis marred by poor expression".

A regrettable outcome of this situation is that some students begin to perceive the significant risks that are associated with sticking their necks out syntactically and may opt, where possible, to plagiarise. Plagiarism too, has its risks but I think some students recognise that it is a safer bet, at least in the short run.

A consequence of this situation for us at the Language and Learning Section is that many students (and staff) have come to perceive us as essentially a correction service - to help get a piece of work in a grammatically fit state for submission. This in some instances has led to students becoming rather too dependent on our counselling (and particularly the red pen) and to view a visit to the section as a compulsory step in the completion of any piece of writing.

One of the main challenges for us then has been to find efficient ways of assisting students to develop their grammatical proficiency and more significantly to help them develop greater autonomy and confidence in their approach to writing tasks. In this paper I will present samples of what I see as the more prominent errors evident in NESB writing (particularly the writing of speakers of East Asian languages) and will then discuss techniques I have used to deal with these problems.

Typical Grammatical Problems in NESB Writing

The following is neither a rigorous taxonomy nor a particularly comprehensive corpus. I am sure though that many of the errors presented will look rather familiar.

Cohesion

1. Theme and Rheme (Given and New Information)
   Electronic file cabinets are suggested to overcome the problem. A database management can be considered as an *electronic file cabinet*.
2. Reference
   Once *the user* has created a *data file*, its structure is very difficult to change. Therefore *they* must define the field broadly enough to include future potential changes in the categories.
3. Transitions
   The purpose of this essay is to explain the principles behind relational databases and discuss the advantages and drawbacks of this structure. *On the other hand*, it will suggest some alternatives which are available to offset the disadvantage.

Sentence Structure

1. Subordination
   It has been found that the current system is not able to recover overdue books. *Because* the reader card has left out the address of the borrower. Therefore the overdue notice cannot be sent.
2. Relativisation
   All the features described above *are* essential for an information system are currently available.
3. Parallel Structures
   The following actions were taken: *advertising the product, improve quality control and the retail price down.*

Cont. ▶

Noun Phrases

1. Articles

   In ^1960's, China became *a largest* export market for Australian wheat.

2. Number

   a) The report provides many informations about the company.

   b) The seller segments their *customer* into different *group*.

3. Genitive Structures

   Each part clearly shows what is essential in order to make a *review of eight months company's activity events.*

Verb Phrases

1. Subject-Verb Agreement

   This computer process information very rapidly.

2. Tense and Aspect

   In Chinese history the importance of trade *was* ignored because Chinese people *think* that trade only *transfers* goods from one to another and could not *produce* any agricultural or industrial production.

3. Semantic/Syntactic Properties of Verbs

   Unemployment *was* increased between 1981 and 1983.

4. Modals

   The total overall of the actual and estimated sales are also computed so that the company *would* know the actual and estimated sales in each month.

Words

1. Word Forms

   Consumers are allocated into *difference* groups.

2. Lexical Selection

   This report is *suggestive.*

2a Collocation

   Today's technology has *revolutionised* the *problem.*

In order to establish some sort of hierarchy of errors and decide on priorities for teaching, we perhaps need to distinguish between those that are purely unaesthetic and those that make meaning rather vague or ambiguous.

One drawback though, of concentrating exclusively on the identification and eradication of errors is that we will tend to adopt a remedial pedagogy with our students. It is my view that we should not only consider the presence of ill-formed grammatical structures in our students' writing but also those structures that are notably absent. If we look at texts from this perspective, we will be led to a more developmental approach.

Typical Absences in the Grammatical/ Stylistic Repertoires of NESB Writers

The following is a cursory list of what I would deem rare beasts in NESB writing.

Giving Prominence to Certain Information

1. Clefting

   What should be done in this instance is . . .

2. Referents (this, such)

   Such a problem should be dealt with immediately.

3. Semantic Markers

   The essential point here is that . . .

4. Introductory subject (there is/are)

   There are several issues that need to be considered here.

Efficient Grammaticisation

1. Apposition

   The computer, *probably the most significant invention of the 20th Century,* has undergone extraordinary development in the last 20 years.

2. Complex nominalisation

   The virus caused the *loss of thousands of hours of staff and student time.*

Generalising and Qualifying

1. Verbs of Generality

   Policies that are designed to bring down inflation *tend* to cause employment to rise.
   It *would* seem that . . .

2. Adverbs of Frequency

   It can be concluded that when a commodity is in short supply, its price *normally* rises.

There is only time to comment here on the first of these categories - Giving Prominence to Certain Information. It is my observation that in a lot of NESB writing, even when it is superficially well-formed, main ideas are not given the prominence they require or deserve and that texts are often characterised by a disconcerting flatness. (Problems here may also relate to lack of familiarity with the rhetorical structure of English texts. In other words, for students, it may be as much a problem of knowing what to emphasise as knowing how to do it.) It would appear that students simply do not have in their active repertoires the sort of grammatical devices listed above that serve to provide a text with an appropriate sense of drama.

Strategies

How then have I dealt with these problems? At first I must confess to having reached for standard pedagogical grammars eg. Murphy's *English Grammar in Use* in a manner rather akin to a doctor prescribing antibiotics as his patient suffers before him from some undiagnosable illness. It is probably worthwhile to mention briefly here what I see as the inadequacies of such materials as this may serve to shed light on what strategies might be appropriate.

Cont. ►

Many traditional pedagogical grammars present what might be called a mechanistic view of language. The underlying principle is that we may deal with various grammatical structures in splendid isolation (particularly those which are confounding to our students) and once fixed up, they may be plugged back into the system.

From experience I know that after prescribing heavy doses (at times overdoses!) of various structures - the passive, articles - students become rather expert at completing exercises but their writing often continues to falter at the first sign of one of these target structures.

Language learning, as Rutherford (1987) points out, clearly cannot be characterised as a mere "gradual accumulation of language constructs that have been mastered".He proposes an organic rather than a mechanistic model of language and suggests that we can only understand and students can only learn the grammar system of English by coming to see how it relates to two other systems that operate in the language, namely discourse and semantics. We note for example that "the passive voice" is inclined to behave rather predictably in the single contextless sentences of the Murphy text but we find this structure has a more capricous life in the rough and tumble of extended discourse. The usual injunctions like "the passive is used when the subject is either not known or not important" do not necessarily apply in this context. We note that in texts "the passive" also has an important positioning function, allowing for the appropriate arrangement of elements within and between sentences in compliance with the given-new principle of discourse. This is demonstrated in the following examples from Rutherford where the choice between active and passive is determined by the information structure of the preceding sentence.

a) *On stage appeared a man and a child. The child sang a song.* (active)
b) *Last on the programme were a song and a piano piece. The song was sung by a child.* (passive)

I have come to recognise then that it is folly to attempt to build a student's grammatical competence bit by bit, structure by structure as it were. This is because clearly this is not the way language is acquired and clearly not the way language *is*. We cannot hope therefore to set the grammatical syllabus for our students; rather, we can only help the learner to learn whatever it is he learns.

A far more satisfactory approach is the modelling of appropriate texts. One technique I have found useful in this regard is Dictogloss. Procedures for Dictogloss session are outlined in Ruth Wajnryb's *Grammar Workout* (though we may find that the texts presented are not altogether suitable for tertiary students). A sample of a text I have used is shown in the Appendix.

Dictogloss is useful for the following reasons: firstly, we are dealing with texts and not the single contextless sentences that are typical of many pedagogical grammars. Secondly, we can use texts that characterise the grammatical style of particular academic disciplines. Similarly we can seek to include in these texts, those sorts of structures that students tend to have problems with or which tend to be absent from their repertoires. Thirdly, the procedure involves students in a quite intense processing of language - to see it under the microscope as it were. There is no attempt here to instil the rules of grammar but instead to raise to students' consciousness certain features of the language. This, to my mind, is a more plausible way of facilitating those little understood processes that are involved in acquiring a second language.

I should also mention here briefly a few shortcomings that I have come to recognise in the technique. The first is the fact that the author of the text is controlling entirely the ideas and language students have to work with. It is possible that semantic connections that are clear to the author may not be so comprehensible to those whose task it is to reconstruct the text. The other possible problem is that the author could be said to be imposing a particular personal grammatical style that may somehow be at odds with a student's own emerging style.

A possible solution here is to begin with student-authored texts and then to present in Dictogloss sessions, edited versions (plausible reconstructions) of their writing. The aim here is to show how their content might be rendered in a more appropriate, accurate and evocative form.

Postscript

Mentioning the role computers might play in assisting NESB students in their writing may suggest that I am something of a whiz in this field, which I certainly am not. In fact what I wish to present here is very much the Luddite view.

The Language and Learning Section, within the structure of the University, shares an umbrella with educational technologists. One of them, who is aware of our work and the long hours we spend with students and their writing, gleefully informed me one day that he had found a software solution to all our problems - a grammar check program. In true Luddite fashion I immediately feared for my job. Wrecking machines presented itself as a possibility but I realised that this may also put my job in some jeopardy. I knew I had little choice but to go along.

The following is a paragraph from an assignment of one of my students that was fed into the computer for its appraisal. We note that while this passage is quite comprehensible, it is a little inelegant.

> *An End-User which I'll be mention in this report is Mr Goslo. He is a reservation train senior officer, at Spencer Street Station, in Melbourne, Victoria. The kind of works which he dose are; selling and made booking of country and interstate tickets, check the number of seats that still available and gave details of the time of the departed and the arrived of a particular train, at a particular place.*

Cont. ▶

The following is the computer's response. I knew, at least for the time being, that my job was safe. (Note that the commentary in parentheses refers to the succeeding sentence or phrase.)

> An End-User (# that is almost always preferred to which in this situation. If you really mean 'which', then it usually needs to be preceded by a comma. Press the Help key for more information.) which I'll be mention in this report is Mr Goslo. He is a reservation train senior officer, at Spencer Street Station, in Melbourne, Victoria. (# Long sentences can be difficult to read and understand. Consider revising so that no more than one complete thought is expressed in each sentence.) The (# Consider omitting 'kind of'.) kind of works (# That is almost always preferred to which in this situation. If you really mean 'which' then it usually needs to be preceded by a comma. Press the Help key for more information.) which (# The singular noun 'he' may be used incorrectly with the plural form of the verb 'dose'.) he dose are; selling and made booking of country and interstate tickets, check the number of seats that still available and gave details of the time of the departed and the arrived of a particular train, at a particular place.

Feeling a little cocky now, I tested the computer on a selection of the sample errors discussed earlier in this paper. These and the computer's opinion of them are shown below.

1. It has been found that the current system is not able to recover books. Because the reader card has left out the address of the borrower. Therefore the overdue notice cannot be sent.
2. All the features described above are essential for an information system are currently available.
3. The following actions were taken : advertising the product improve the quality control and the retail (# Avoid ending a sentence with a preposition.) price down.
4. (# No verb found - this may be an incomplete sentence.) In 1960's, China became a largest export market for Australia's wheat.
5. (# No verb found - this may be an incomplete sentence.) The seller segments their customer into different group.
6. Each part clearly shows what is essential (# Simplify.) in order to make a review of eight months company's activity events.
7. In Chinese history the importance of trade was ignored because Chinese people think that trade only transfers goods from one to another and could not produce any agricultural or industrial production.

The result: Human Dignity 2, Artificial Intelligence 0. Clearly the computer was rattled now (especially when we consider the inexplicable comments offered for sentences 4 and 5).

Enough of the smugness though! Developments in this field are certainly in their infancy and one can imagine considerably more sophisticated programs than this one emerging in the future. However, one must ask firstly whether a really thorough computerised analysis of the language is possible. We note for example that this program is only able to process grammatical units up to sentence level (and this quite inadequately). It is difficult to imagine how any program could give a sensible version of the labyrinthine structure of discourse. Furthermore, we note that this program is unable to make any appraisal of the semantic content of these texts (and it is inconceivable how this could ever be done, given that the semantic potential of language is infinite).

The second question is whether computerised analyses such as this are desirable. It is bothering to see in this program, hoary old rules about 'prepositions at the ends of sentences' being wheeled out. One can imagine the widespread use of such programs leading to a rigid and pervasive prescriptivism - a computer-led standardisation of the language. This would surely serve, in the long term, to put limits on the language's boundless creativity.

I believe, in the field of language pedagogy, we humans have still got our work cut out for us.

Appendix

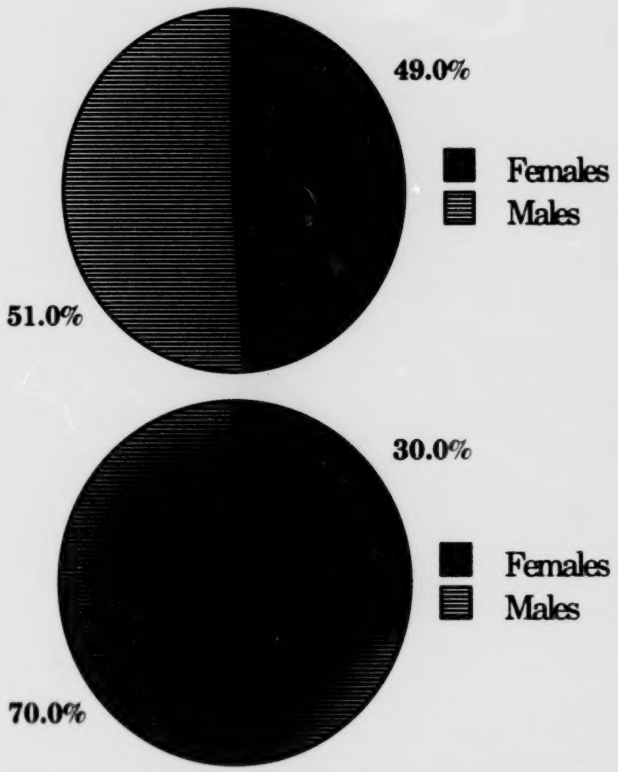

Figure One : Context - Degree, by Sex (by Type) 1980

Cont. ▶

> These statistics show that in 1980 females and males earned a similar proportion of master's degrees. However, males earned significantly more doctoral degrees. This suggests that participation by females in higher education at this time was strong at lower levels but women for some reason had less involvement at the upper level. It would be interesting to look at more recent statistics to see if this situation has changed.

Figure Two : Text

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This article was presented as a paper at the 1991 ACTA/ATESOL Summer School in Sydney.

Tim Moore is a Senior Tutor at the Language and Learning Section at Monash University (Caulfield campus). He has taught ESL and EFL both in Australia and Italy.

TESOL TALK

Teaching Literature in ESL Classes

Nadia Casarotto is interviewed by Chris Davison
(transcript edited by Susan Fullagar)

Introduction

CD: Can you tell us a little bit about your background?

NC: I've been and ESL and Italian teacher here at Newlands (in Coburg, a mid-northern suburb of Melbourne) for the past 4 years. It has quite a high percentage of students from non-English speaking backgrounds, the majority of whom would be "second-phase learners". (see Glossary)

CD: You don't have a lot of recent arrivals?

NC: This year there has been an increase in students that have come from language centres but generally the proportion of second-phase students is higher.

Teaching of literature

CD: When did you first start experimenting with different approaches to teaching literature?

NC: Having been exposed in my Dip Ed that year to several new ideas I thought that as soon as I started teaching I would try to put some of those into practice. There has been a continual adaptation through the years.

CD: What do you define as *literature?* How is it different from the many types of reading materials we give students anyway?

NC: First of all I like literature to take a variety of forms to give students exposure to different types of language styles. Some forms of literature can help students relate to some of the experiences that they've been through, and by looking at things in different ways students can develop different perceptions, different ways of articulating those experiences.

CD: Do you see literature simply as a confirming experience for them, or do you see it having other roles as well?

NC: Yes, it's also a means for students to broaden their experiences, in terms of learning about other people, understanding different areas, and social settings, not just confirming or denying what they already know.

CD: Being exposed to completely different experiences and challenged by different ways of looking at them all?

NC: Yes, as well as not being alienated by what's in the book, so not introducing something completely different.

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CD: Do you see yourself as a literature teacher or an ESL teacher in this particular respect?

NC: I think you'd have to say both, combined, because you are teaching literature, you're teaching students how to analyse the book, how to interpret it in different ways, but at the same time there's the ESL perspective where you're trying to give the students particular skills in gaining access to that particular book and using certain techniques to get across the main ideas that are essential for their grasp of that book.

CD: So you wouldn't be using literature as some of the recent publications do - you're not simply using literature as a means of teaching language. It is actually an end in itself?

NC: No it's not an end in itself. It's a very valuable tool for teaching, and through it you can teach English because you can exploit so many different language aspects, and especially the different forms of language. Literature is rich in different styles, dialogue, discourse forms that students can be exposed to, and the language through which those forms are expressed. Some books have slang. There is also descriptive writing. All of these are very important aspects of learning a language, as well, of course, as simply being able to enjoy the literature for its own sake.

CD: What is the difference between the way you're teaching literature now, and the way it has traditionally been taught?

NC: I try to get students to participate as much as possible, to make it more student - centred. Students are encouraged to give ideas, to express what they've understood, how they've interpreted a certain book, and whether they've liked it or not, rather than the teacher just talking at students.

CD: That sounds similar to what is happening in many mainstream English classrooms as they move towards responsive approaches. It links with reader response theory and those sorts of ideas?

NC: I think it is positive to move in that direction, trying to get a greater response from students, but I think in the ESL class I use a variety of techniques where students actually have to run part of the class. They come up and tell the rest of the students what the plot was about and fill out a chart with the main ideas, or draw part of a setting. It's more involving that way, whereas in a mainstream class there's often not that same level of participation and interaction among the students.

Cont. ▶

Selection of texts

CD: Is there any difference in your objectives, in the way you go about developing your literature program?

NC: When I choose a book there are certain considerations that I make in connection with the students in my class. The first thing is that I try to choose a book that has a theme which is appealing to the students. I consider their past experiences. It might be that I select something about relationships, conflicts, changes - things that students can identify with, and that perhaps relates to the wider curriculum. If, for example, in a subject like General Studies they are studying cultural differences, multiculturalism and similarly in a topic like *Self* they are looking at learning and growth and how a person develops, I try to take that into account and establish links across areas of the curriculum. The other thing I consider is the language level of a text. It's important to get something that is accessible to the students, but at the same time, is not too easy; something that stretches them a little.

What is *literature?*

CD: Do you think that ESL students should be exposed to the best available literature?

NC: In the literature I choose I try, of course, to do that as much as possible. I try to expose them to things that I know they're interested in, and will appeal to them. There's no definite list from which books must be chosen.

CD: Can you give us an example of a text that's worked well with your students?

NC: I've recently done a short story *My Long Journey*. It's autobiographical, written by a Vietnamese woman. As you know some of the students who have come from Asia have been exposed to similar sorts of situations and so can identify with the author's feelings and traumas. The students who hadn't come from that type of background, I think really came to understand in greater depth, and appreciate more fully, the problems which those students had experienced.

CD: Do you sometimes find that it's difficult choosing a text though that students can identify with, one which isn't too close or too sensitive for them? When, for example, *The Killing Fields* was on the Year 12 syllabus, it was criticised because it was felt that it would create too much angst and upset many students, particularly those from Cambodia.

NC: Of course the teacher needs to consider that sort of thing. The short story I mentioned was, quite manageable because it didn't really look at the issue in that sort of way. It described more the difficulties that migrants often have when they come to Australia. I don't think that it is limited to any particular group, so I thought that the wider group could relate to it. But, we have had similar problems - so I can understand how *The Killing Fields* could be traumatic.

CD: Many people would of course argue that in some sense that is not *Literature* with a capital L! How do you feel about the notion that all students going through senior years of schooling should be exposed to the best of Shakespeare and other classics, or even more recent examples such as *To Kill a Mockingbird?*

NC: Well, I've found that Shakespeare is a little difficult for ESL students. I haven't studied it with my own students.

CD: It seems that some people have a very fixed, narrow view of what is *Literature*. I guess that we need to question the assumptions that lie behind people's views, because if you look at most of the literature chosen for study it hasn't changed over many years. It tends to be what is seen as the best available literature and it tends to reflect the English-speaking, male, Anglo world, and so there are a few problems with that definition.

NC: Yes. I agree. Some people have a very narrow view of what literature is, and it's certainly true that some of the values that come through in that literature are Anglo-Saxon. A lot of students really find it difficult to cope with that because it assumes that they have certain values and can identify with those, whereas that's not the case at all. Teachers really need to be more flexible in their choices and to consider other forms of literature, other styles rather than just the standard novel.

CD: A couple of years ago I think you told me about studying a Canadian short novel with your students, and you felt that it was very successful with that group. Is it correct to say that don't always choose things that are obviously connected to the students' experiences?

NC: Yes. It was connected to their experiences, if in an indirect way, because it dealt with cultural differences.

CD: What was that novel?

NC: *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* by Margaret Craven. It treated cultural issues including conflict on a number of different levels and one of those levels that I thought was quite relevant to the students who were studying the book at the time was the conflict between young people and parents. And as well they were experiencing change, having to move from one environment into another. This is what most of these students have gone through, so I think in that way it was related to their experiences.

Cont. ▶

CD: What are the other things that you consider, besides the story-line and any language difficulties, when you are choosing a text?

NC: I look at the book itself and I find that clear visuals usually help in encouraging students to predict story lines. I've mentioned exposing them to as many writing forms as possible and also just getting them something that's rich in language exposes them to important features such as metaphors, different registers and so on.

Planning a program: integrating language and literature

CD: You talked about integrating ESL and literature in the approach that you used how do you actually do that in terms of planning a program?

NC: After you've chosen the particular book it's very important to not jump straight into and just start reading it. It's very important to do some pre-teaching, so that might include historical aspects that the book hinges on, it might include geography - setting up maps to see where the action takes place, having a look at any cultural assumptions that are made and explaining those and setting them up properly, or other implications that students should have before they begin reading the book.

CD: Can you give an example?

NC: *The Wife of Martin Guerre* for example, is a very popular book at Year 11. It is set in France in feudal times. One of the things that it is necessary to pre-teach is the structure of society in those days. We read about the feudal system and discussed it and then the students represented it in diagram form where they could clearly see the relationships at different levels in that society. The other aspect that had to be pre-taught for that particular book was where the action occurred in a small village called Artigues, so students were given a map of France and Spain and located it and practised describing directions, and the places in relation to other major places described.

CD: What else do you do while planning your program after thinking about any pre-teaching?

NC: You need to consider the types of skills that you would like the students to develop as they read that particular text, and plan the activities that you think will develop them. You may, for example, wish to develop skills in mapping, keeping a time line for major events, extracting key information and identifying the setting and how it changes over a period time, extending vocabulary related to that topic, and trying to get students to try to predict word meanings from the context, which helps them to develop the use of reading cues.

CD: So one part of your planning is to work out how you will get students to predict the vocabulary used in the book, the meanings of those items, and what vocabulary you're going to target in each part of the book?

NC: Yes.

CD: Are there other things you take into account in your initial planning?

NC: You need to think about the themes but that's part of your decision in having chosen that particular text.

CD: What about functions and their exponents, the structures, and more specific language items?

NC: You have to focus on the different functions and notions that come up in the book, things such as giving the students skills in being able to describe or being able to distinguish between different sequences. In relation to those, using say the past tense or the present tense, they need to decide whether that action has taken place and what tense is most appropriate to express it in their own writing and the verb forms they would use to fill in key information about a plot. They could also describe feelings as they read, experiences, characterisation, and, in relation to these, use key adjectives describing appearances and perhaps even prepare a visual of a character using key adjectives.

CD: And I imagine you could do the same sort of thing for describing places - that's fairly crucial to the setting?

NC: Yes, we did the play *The Club* a couple of years ago and there was a pair activity which involved one student reading the stage directions for the setting while listener drew that setting. That was a good activity for listening comprehension. Other functions and notions that you need to consider are cause and effect - some novels are quite good in being able to set up this sort of relationship where students need to distinguish between what is a cause and what is an effect. For example, if a character has made a certain decision, what is the effect or the consequence. The other thing is being able to write in a comparative way perhaps about two characters or about the setting of one chapter and the setting in the next and using key words, for example, *whereas, but, however, on the other hand,*. In the short story *My Long Journey,* the students needed to compare Saigon and Melbourne because the author writes about her perceptions of the differences between them.

CD: You mean they are learning to do this through the study of the literature; that they are developing skills that they can transfer into other situations?

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Cont. ▶

NC: Yes, they can transfer those skills to many other subject areas.

CD: Are you only focusing on reading and writing skills when you're studying literature?

NC: You also need to focus on all macro-skill areas and best way to do that is, I think, to get students to speak as much as possible. One good way of doing that is to get them to recap parts of the story and have them talk about what they thought of those. Another thing you can do is to get students to read part of the book aloud. And also when they're giving you information, filling in the plot and the setting, they also need to do as much speaking as possible and just throw up the words.

CD: Why do you feel they need to do so much talking - I mean this would be quite different from many more traditional literature classes, wouldn't it?

NC: Yes it would be in some ways but I think a very important part of being able to appreciate literature is being able to articulate what you feel about it, what you've learnt about it and what you feel is happening and, especially in ESL, students often feel frustrated at not being able to express their ideas. They really should be encouraged to do so.

CD: And that presumably would them help them with expressing their ideas in writing?

NC: Yes, one reinforces the other.

CD: I remember in more traditional English classes when teachers doing literature led the class through some of the key issues of the book. Do you see your oral work as different from that?

NC: I find that in a traditional English class, ESL students tend not to speak at all and although there might be a lot of discussion going on in that class the ESL students are not able to articulate their ideas to the same extent as they are in a small group situation. I feel that my role, as well as teaching them the different skills through literature, is also to encourage them to articulate their own ideas and feel more confident about doing so.

CD: So you have much more tightly structured, much more tightly focused, sorts of tasks rather than just let's talking about how students feel about the character?

NC: I try to integrate all the tasks; I try to make sure that the oral activity leads on or is in some way connected with the written activity, the reading activity and possibly a listening comprehension. I try not to block each skill into a certain time slot or allowance.

Activities

CD: Can you give an example of some of the activities you use, perhaps with a particular model?

NC: I've mentioned the charts that we keep. We usually have big sheets of butcher's paper, titled *plot, characters, vocabulary, setting* and *themes*. For each one I try to elicit the main ideas from the students themselves.

CD: Is this just a one-off thing that they do for one lesson?

NC: No, this is continual, and then of course you follow up that activity with others that are closely connected, so with the plot for example, the students have put up the main ideas in note form and then they have to sequence those and use them to write a summary for the book. In relation to the characters, the students may develop character posters matching adjectives with something that the character has said. Other ideas that could be used, especially in pre-reading, could be taking chapter titles to predict the possible plot line. Students see only the chapter titles and perhaps in groups they look at those titles and then try to decide what they might be about. I find that when students read, they engage more with the text because they're trying to find out if what they have predicted is correct. Another idea is to use the visuals from the book. Students are usually able to get a skeletal outline of what the book may be about by just looking at possible issues or events and trying to match those with the appropriate chapter title.

CD: Or the front cover, or the picture on the cover?

NC: Yes, front covers often have quite a lot of detail. The cover of *The Wife of Martin Guerre* gave students a clear indication that the book is not set in modern day Australia, or France, because they could see from the costumes and sorts of work that people were doing in fields.

CD: Do you read the book and do the activities chapter by chapter?

NC: It's a very long process. We usually read the book chapter by chapter. Sometimes I get different students to prepare a chapter at home and they lead the discussion. They're the "teacher" say for 10 or 15 minutes. They'll come up and fill out the plot chart and ask the other students if they have any other points they would like to add. We generally read it chapter by chapter, fill in the charts and then some of the activities fit in well as the program develops while others are usually done at the end of the book drawing various aspects together.

CD: What are some examples of that?

NC: The character posters I mentioned can be done towards the end. Students then have an overall understanding of a character and why he or she has acted in a particular way. In the short story I mentioned earlier about the Vietnamese woman, there were some poems about her feelings. An activity could involve students writing a poem about their feelings on migrating, or what they think real happiness is.

Cont. ▶

CD: Is reading chapter by chapter rather laborious?

NC: Yes, it can be at times, but to break the monotony which sometimes occurs, you can vary the approach, for example, by giving students a chapter each to prepare in the way that I suggested before.

CD: Can you assume that students will be able to read it by themselves - you don't ask them to do that, do you?

NC: I ask them to read the book as we're going along but often I prefer to work through the book with students, and in some cases we don't read all the details of the entire chapter, but just highlight the important information.

CD: So how long would it take? It sound as if you do an enormous amount of work?

NC: Yes, but I think its worth it, because at the end you see that students have really grasped a book, are able to talk about it and give their opinions and ideas. I would rather do a book thoroughly than just skim the surface and know that students haven't really understood or gained the skills that they need.

Shorter works or abridged versions?

CD: If you're going to use novels, do you prefer to use short novels or do you use abridged versions?

NC: Usually I try to use shorter novels, not abridged versions. Most of the novels I've done have actually been of quite a reasonable length, so they've been quite manageable generally.

CD: And why don't you like abridged versions?

NC: I just find it more useful if students are just exposed to the natural language without its being altered in any way.

CD: The depth of characterisation is often lost in abridged versions, isn't it?

NC: Yes, because they're compromising in a lot of areas and you run the risk of students getting an artificial view of some aspects that you really need for students to distinguish. For that reason it's better to do the full version of the novel.

CD: It can reduce the book to a plot, rather than a real exploration of the themes and the characters?

NC: Yes. Some students have difficulties in grasping what a theme is and they often confuse that with the plot. They are the very aspects that you really need for students to distinguish. For that reason it's better to do the full version of the novel.

CD: How then do you teach ESL students to recognise the difference between plot and theme?

NC: One of the ways is to try to relate that theme to something that's happening in their immediate environment. For example when dealing with *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*, with the conflict between the Indians and the Europeans, you can help them to see that that sort of situation relates to the Aborigines here and perhaps even to what's happened to some indigenous or minority group in the students' home countries.

CD: Like the Indians in some of the South American countries?

NC: Yes, so you can try to relate it to a wider area to show students that the issue has application in a number of other situations beyond the setting in the book. The plot is an aspect of the particular book, whereas the theme is far more wide reaching than simply a description of what happened.

Increased student direction

CD: You said that your approach to the teaching literature has developed over time, and that you have developed and adapted ideas. Are there some things, for example, that you're putting more emphasis on now than you did in the beginning?

NC: I'm putting more emphasis on getting students to actually come up and write, fill in the charts by themselves, because when I started off I found that I was the centre of activity and I realised that it was very important for the students to contribute their own information. Gradually the students have begun to try to take over a bit and come up and write things out themselves rather than me always being there.

CD: Translating their feelings and reactions and responses?

NC: It's students themselves asking others what they think rather than just asking me, "Is this right?" They look now to other students for advice or suggestions as well. In that way, everybody becomes involved.

Attitudes to literature and working in a second language

CD: Have the students you're working with had much experience, particularly perhaps the ones who've done some of their schooling overseas? Do you find their whole notion of studying literature a bit alien, a bit unusual?

NC: No, some students do read quite a lot in their first language and when they go home they tend to read books. Students generally enjoy reading and seem to have coped with it quite well.

CD: Do you use the first language at all in your teaching? Do you encourage students to use translated short stories, for example, where there may be a version in the students' mother tongues and a version in English?

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Cont. ►

NC: Not generally, but recently in the short story about the Vietnamese woman's journey, the poems were written in Vietnamese as well. I would like to if I could get hold of more material .....

Materials and resources for teachers

CD: There's a scarcity of good multilingual materials that are available?

NC: Yes, I'm not really quite sure what's available or where to get them.

CD: There is a need for more resources. What would you recommend that teachers have a look at if they want to try these approaches to teaching literature? Are there any good resources you've found that are particularly useful?

NC: There's actually a book by Greenwood *Class Readers* that goes through a series of activities that teachers can use in developing units of work around different novels and short stories. Activities that get outside the traditional question / answer type of tasks where students just read a book and do questions on each chapter. Teachers need to get beyond that and try to experiment with different activities that exploit different areas, and I think that book is very useful in suggesting those things.

CD: Thanks, Nadia. You've certainly given us food for thought. And best wishes for the continued success of your program.

Texts referred to in the interview

Craven, Margaret *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* Picador

Hoang Thinh, 1989, *My Long Journey: A Vietnamese Woman's Story* Curriculum Development Centre in association with Statewide Multicultural Education Resource Centre Victorian Ministry of Education Canberra

Joffe, Roland *The Killing Fields* Feature Film Warner Bros

Lee, Harper *To Kill a Mockingbird* Penguin

Lewis, Janet *The Wife of Martin Guerre* Penguin

The teacher resource mentioned is:

Greenwood, Jean 1988, *Class Readers* Oxford University Press (One of a series called *Resource Books for Teachers* edited by Alan Maley)

Chris Davison, currently President of ACTA, lectures in linguistics and second language education in the Institute of Education, University of Melbourne.

MY LONG JOURNEY

A Vietnamese Woman's Story

TESOL REVIEWER

Recent publications are available at no cost for review. Reviewers retain the books for their personal use. If you are interested in reviewing books of your choice, contact the Book Review Editor.

Multicultural Sing-Along Big Book Program

Kathleen Beal
Addison Wesley 1991
Four Big Books $99.95 or each $26.95, 16p.
Four Small Books $13.95 or each $3.95, 16p.
Teachers Guide $19.95, 56p.
Reviewed by Gaye Nicholls, St. Gabriel's, Reservoir, Victoria.

It is likely that teachers of infant classes would incorporate topics such as *Me, My Family, Colour* and *The Seasons* into their yearly curriculum. This set of Addison-Wesley Multicultural Big Books presents each of these topics in the form of songs.

The titles of the four books are:

It's Pink, I Think	(Colours)
I Like You	(Me)
I Love My Family	(My Family)
Here It's Winter	(The Seasons)

The texts of these books are predictable, and contain rhythm, rhyme and repetition - features which make the books particularly appropriate for ESL children. The children will be able to learn to read together, thus eliminating stress, failure and competition.

Each big book is accompanied by a set of four identical small books, which provide for independent reading once children have become familiar with language models practised in a group.

Accompanying this set of books is a *Whole Language Activity Guide* which outlines a variety of integrated whole-language activities which can be developed around the books. For each of the four books this guide lists appropriate topics, and key concepts and language items. It offers ideas on building literacy skills, emphasising the fact that these books are designed to be read and reread many times.

Multicultural appreciation is developed through the activities outlined in the Guide. This is an important value to share with children in homogeneous communities, as well as those in heterogeneous environments. All children should learn to appreciate and respect the diversity of lifestyles and cultures found in our own country and around the world. The bibliography at the end of each section recommends other books on the same themes, which have multicultural characters, settings and themes, and which will further enhance multicultural awareness.

The structure of this set is enhanced by making the stories singable and is often less threatening than conversation. Unfortunately a tape recording of the songs is not included in the set.

I believe that the ideas and suggestions outlined in this program could help most teachers adapt and devise activities to meet the needs and interests of the children they teach.

Writing Across Languages: Analysis of L2 Text

Ulla Connor and Robert Kaplan
Addison Wesley 1987
$29.95, 202p.
Reviewed By Lorna Hannan, Catholic Education Office of Victoria.

Kaplan wrote the original doodles article more than twenty years ago. The actual title of the article was Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education and its assertion was that the rhetorical structure of languages may differ fundamentally from each other.

The idea struck a deep chord with many who did not even read the article. It was widely accepted , often without criticism of any sort - and was thought to express an axiom about how the rhetorical culture of a language determines thought and thought patterns, which then emerge in ESL writing.

In this collection, Kaplan himself admits that he probably overstated the difference and (this) case. He now qualifies his original assertions to state that various languages are potentially capable of the same ways of presenting information and the sequence of argument, and that it is preference which plays a major role in determining how a language will be used. For example, not only a writer's preference, but also the preferences of the intended audience will help to shape a particular piece of writing.

Once again Kaplan is making big assertions which seem to be on the right track but in particular cases are either obvious or dangerous because they are liable to over-generalisation.

However, the collection of papers which he has co-edited comes to grips with what can be more closely and certainly observed. Ulla Connor's chapter on Argumentative Patterns in Student Essays : Cross-Cultural Differences combines linguistic and sociolinguistic analyses to focus on the processes of reading and writing. Ways in which teachers may take up their observation of students and their work could be derived from her study.

Enkvist's chapter Text Linguistics for the Applier : An Orientation has an economical account of sentence-based text models and some lively insights into the paragraph and the purposes and varieties of paragraphs from which teachers could also derive some new procedures for teaching writing.

The core of this collection is contained in Carrell's eight page chapter on Text as Interaction : Some Implications of Text Analysis and Reading Research into reading focuses on interaction. Useful teaching and learning strategies jump off the page into the ESL teacher's lesson plans. Carrell goes through research into reading that looks at types of texts and how students taught about them are able to use them more effectively - for example, students who examined cause and effect writing or time order writing later recalled the content of their reading more effectively than those who did not. She backs the hunch that students who have the structures demonstrated to them will be able to use them in reading and in writing. So would I and so it may be just what the majority of teachers concerned to have their students prepared for the language tasks of the senior secondary years are looking for, whether they be mother tongue, second, fifth or foreign users of English.

Penguin Elementary Reading Skills

Mark Bartram and Anne Perry
Penguin 1989
$11.99, 136p.

Reading on Purpose

Fraida Dubin and Elite Olshtain
Addison Wesley 1987
$25.95, 223p.
Reviewed by Vivienne Tellefson, Brunswick English Language Centre, Victoria.

Reading Skills, a text suited to elementary and lower intermediate students, provides practice in purposeful reading techniques and strategies. Word for word translation is actively discouraged. Instead, each reading and accompanying exercise is arranged to help the student focus on a specific feature of the text, and through this, a particular reading skill.

In each of the two sections of predicting, deducing meaning from context, scanning and skimming, reading for detail and using a multilingual dictionary are allocated separate chapters. However, while this opportunity to practise skills in isolation from one another has value in helping the beginning student focus more clearly on a new skill, such restrictiveness of activity not only lacks authenticity but becomes tedious. There are only two chapters in which the various skills are integrated and the tasks are more like those the reader will meet in real life.

The content of the text is generally varied and appropriate to upwards of middle secondary aged students, though some of the references, for example to *hampsters, haddock, pound notes* and *scooters,* lack relevance to an Australian context and would be better adapted.

Finally, despite the limitations of a generally lacklustre, cramped and unattractive layout, and the presentation of reading as an overall mechanical, single focus activity with little scope for personal response, *Reading Skills* does provide much worthwhile practice in a variety of reading skills and used selectively, would be very helpful for students dependent on a translation style of reading.

Cont. ▶

Reading on Purpose offers a sharp contrast to *Reading Skills* in terms of organisation and emphasis, as well as in audience. Aimed at intermediate and advanced adult learners, the text is structured around themes rather than skills and it is significant that these are integrated within each response rather than practised in isolation. The reader is invited to engage actively with the text by responding personally to the issues and ideas raised within the readings. Much more than in *Reading Skills*, the focus is on reading as communication and the negotiation of meaning rather than on mechanical skill practice.

The book includes selections from such well known writers as Bertrand Russell, Isaac Asimov and James Thurber as well as a variety of newspaper and journal articles. A diverse range of topics is covered including issues of health, employment, science and human relations. As well as adding interest value to the text, such thematic organisation allows for language to be recycled in meaningful, varied and authentic ways.

The activities following the readings are also purposeful and varied, and most significantly, not overdone. As is stressed in the introduction, "The exercise materials are crucial to a reading skills text. *Reading on Purpose* tries to aid skill building, but not too much in order to obscure the pleasure which can be derived from reading." It is significant too that many of the exercises invite students to respond to the text in writing and there is also much opportunity for pair, group and discussion work. Thus reading is viewed in conjunction with the other language skills to which it is related. Overall the text is an excellent resource for anyone committed to the teaching of reading in an integrated, purposeful and pleasurable way.

Strictly Academic: A reading and writing text

Pat Currie and Ellen Cray
Newbury House 1987
$33.95, 221p.

Research Matters

Liz Hamp-Lyons and Karen Berry Courter
Newbury House 1984
$32.95, 226p.

Reading Skills for the Social Sciences

L Haarman, P Leech and J Murray
Oxford University Press 1988
$18.95, 132p.

Issues: Alternative texts for advanced students

Phil Bowman
Thomas Nelson 1989
$14.95, 176p.
Reviewed by Helen Jenkins

Strictly Academic is addressed to advanced ESL students who are about to enter tertiary education. It assumes native-like reading abilities, and would in fact be suitable for use with native speakers as well. Indeed, it would be of value in first semester study skills courses in tertiary institutions. The book would save the teacher of such courses a great deal of time, since it assembles in one place several authentic texts on a given subject, then bases discussion, reading and writing tasks around them. The book is intended for class use, and although it could be used for individual study, some of its advantages would in that case be lost.

The accompanying *Instructor's Manual* was not available for review.

Strictly Academic is a joint USA - Canadian volume, but much of the subject matter - animal communication, dreaming, artificial intelligence - is not particularly North American. Topics such as the Greenhouse Effect and Nobel Prize winners do concentrate on North American information, but could readily be supplemented with Australian material.

Each group of reading texts is made the focus for the development of a particular writing skill needed for academic study. For example, the topic *Pain Control* is used for take-home exam techniques, *Dreams* for short-answer exam questions, *Animal Communication* for longer exam answers, the *Greenhouse Effect* and *Artificial Intelligence* for essay writing. Step-by-step guidance is provided, for example on preparing to write and then writing an exam answer. Chapter 5, on essay writing, is particularly valuable, in that it includes advice on learning from each other and on self-evaluation as well as on the stages of essay drafting and revision. Teachers who are plagued by plagiarism will be delighted to see that students are instructed in note-taking, and then ordered to write answers from their notes, and not from the text itself.

The book contains useful definitions, advice and information about texts, all of it very succinct, and always with reference to text examples. For example:

> The text you have just read contains many assertions; that is, positive statements of observations, findings, opinions or beliefs. (p. 50)

And:

> Good writers help their readers by signalling in various ways both the information coming up in the text and its organisation. Good readers actively use these signals to help themselves grasp the main ideas. (p. 44)

And:

> There are various ways to clarify - e.g. definition, explanation, exemplification, comparison, contrast, and restatement. The writer selects the one most effective for the purpose, depending on the nature of the audience and the information. (p. 182)

Cont. ▶

This type of information blends well with the book's approach to grammar. Aspects of grammar are always dealt with in context, and the focus is on their function in the text. For example, the reader is told: "Another way of adding information economically is to use participles." Examples and practice follow, but are directed towards the appropriate use of participles in the student's own essay. Grammar here is not just rules, but a way of making your meaning clear.

Teachers would need to use supplementary materials for some skills. There is nothing in the book about bibliographies and using libraries, and while students are required to give short oral presentations, there is very little advice on how to go about it.

But for the skills that it does cover, and for its cooperative learning approach to the mastery of academic skills *Strictly Academic* is an excellent text.

Research Matters provides a good follow-up to *Strictly Academic* in that it introduces the library and research skills necessary for producing one's own piece of work.

The target group is advanced ESL students or even native speakers who need instruction in the study and research methods expected in universities in the English-speaking world. It would therefore be a useful text for a pre-university course, or for study skills work in first year. The book refers primarily to the United States, but the selected readings are on general topics, and the book is well suited to use in Australia.

There are four sections in the book, any or all of which may be chosen according to student's needs. Unit 1, which is very brief, gives step-by-step advice, examples and exercises related to the skills of selecting, paraphrasing and synthesising information. It is an excellent weapon in the war against student plagiarism, a topic taken up again on pp. 160 ff.

Unit 2, Beginning Library Skills, is vital. It requires the student to investigate the library on his/her own campus (which could be done in conjunction with an introductory library tour). The unit includes practice in such things as how to write book and article titles correctly, putting entries in correct alphabetical order, finding things in the catalogue and in indexes. (Where the book refers to the card catalogue, the same exercises can be performed at a computer terminal. This is referred to in Unit 4.) The Dewey system and the Library of Congress Subject headings are briefly introduced. The unit also advises on finding and using encyclopaedias, books, journal articles ("magazine" and "journal" are distinguished) and newspaper articles, including those on microfilm. In practice, much of this information is covered very briefly in beginning-of-year library tours, but *Research Matters* provides a record of information plus a ready-made set of activities for the teacher to use.

Unit 3, The Research Paper, takes the student a big step beyond *Strictly Academic*. Like the two previous units, it provides examples and practice exercises as well as advice. It covers the preliminary activities of selecting and focusing the topic, previewing sources, making and organising notecards and bibliography cards (see Appendix B for bibliography model), and making an outline. It shows how quotes, charts, graphs and tables are properly incorporated in a paper. The section on endnotes / footnotes does not include the Harvard system; teachers wishing their students to use this method would need their own material. Finally, there are brief notes on academic writing style and the importance of proofreading.

The very brief Unit 4, Advanced Library Skills, is considered by the authors to be more relevant to post-graduate students. It concentrates on the use of government documents (American) as source material.

If I were establishing a general pre-university or first year study-skills course for advanced ESL students whose reading ability was adequate for *Strictly Academic,* I would gladly use these two books. It is unfortunate that in practice, many first-year students who need language and study-skills assistance have a much lower level of English.

The third book under review is specific to the social sciences. All tertiary institutions that provide language support services to students should have *Reading Skills for the Social Sciences.* It is designed as an instructional course of about 80 hours, but, once the instructor had worked through the introductory chapter on "The skill and practice of reading", it could also be used for supervised individual study. The authentic readings are wide-ranging, and suitable for use in Australia. Like *Strictly Academic,* this book focuses on language as text, but concentrates on the skills of reading.

There is an emphasis on conventions and genres (drawing on what students already know about them), so that this knowledge can be used for more efficient reading. Each chapter ends with a summary of observations on the genre dealt with. The genres included are book advertisements, preface to a book, introduction to a book, (extracts from) a textbook, book reviews, brief research reports, extended reports, and academic research reports.

Useful observations on genre, grammar in use, skills and so on also occur throughout the chapters, related to the texts and to the exercises, and marked typographically for quick reference. Examples are:

Genre:

> In a research report of an academic nature, the ABSTRACT is likely to contain not only the above information (author's name, academic position and institution, source of funding for the research), but also the key points of the research itself. It is thus useful to read the abstract carefully before starting on the main body of the report . . . (p. 56)

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Grammar:

> One of the most important classes of words in academic prose is that of LINKERS (or conjunctions, connectors, link-words, etc.). The function of linkers is to signal the precise relationship between concepts. They can be classified according to four categories (additive, temporal, causal, adversative) . . . (p. 47)

Skills:

> When important parts of a text are particularly dense or complex, it may be useful to consider them in detail and extract the author's main points in order to clarify the progression of his argument. The exercise below is an example of this kind of operation . . . (p. 97)

Exercises related to the reading passages differentiate the skills of skimming, scanning, and intensive reading. Practice in note-taking is also provided in each chapter.

Vocabulary exercises include work on related sets of noun, verb and adjective, with attention drawn to suffixes, and with students encouraged to find translation equivalents in the mother tongue. Other exercises relate words to glosses of their meanings, or ask students to compare their own definition with a dictionary definition. Attention is drawn repeatedly to key lexical items that are frequent in academic prose, and a very useful appendix lists them (with reference to the page where they occurred). Indeed, one valuable aspect of this book is that it reinforces and reminds as it goes along.

Cloze exercises all have a specific focus, such as:

- use the right tense, but in the context of genre and its conventional use of tense
- use the right modal, and note its meaning
- cohesion cloze, and related work on the semantics of linkers
- drawing attention to whether a noun, verb or adjective is required.

Other text and semantic exercises cover paragraph structure, the tracing of anaphoric and cataphoric items to their referents, and discriminating among examples, contrasts, and further information.

Any student about to embark on a social sciences course at university needs the skills and understandings dealt with in this book. Any student lacking them is not ready for such study.

The final book, *Issues*, another text for advanced ESL students, is a more typical ESL textbook. Like *Strictly Academic*, it uses authentic texts for the development of reading, writing and oral skills. It specifies post-Cambridge First Certificate students as its audience, and is geared to the Proficiency examination. Some of the extracts assume native-like reading ability. The book is intended for class use, but is also suitable for individual study.

Unlike *Strictly Academic*, *Issues* assumes that students can already produce various written genres successfully. They are instructed to 'write a composition' (350 words) on various topics, or a newspaper report, or a short story, or a letter to the editor, with no instruction as to how to go about it.

Much of the material in *Issues* is frightfully British, and therefore not appropriate for use in Australian classrooms. However, the reading materials on education, drugs, men and women and some of these on work and on crime and punishment could be used here. These chapters have some interesting questions and pictures for discussion, and the reading texts would provide background for this oral work.

The language exercises are mechanical, and the same types recur in chapter after chapter. There are comprehension questions (multiple choice, true / false, context questions), cloze exercises, sets of sentences to rewrite into a different grammatical form, and vocabulary exercises (e.g. rewrite, using a given word instead of word/phrase in text; find word or phrase in text with a given meaning; explain words/phrases.) The tests are tedious.

Issues is the sort of textbook that results from teaching to an examination (and may be very effective for that narrow purpose). If you have a copy of it in the library, and if you have advanced ESL students (or an upper secondary class with some non-native speakers in it), you might occasionally like to use some of the reading and discussion materials from the second half of this book.

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Read, Note, Write: How to prepare assignments

Plan, Write, Rewrite: How to prepare assignments

M. Rosanna McEvedy and Patricia Smith
Thomas Nelson 1990 $14.95 each, 95 and 117 pages.
Reviewed by Michelle Whalen, Marian College West Sunshine, Victoria

These two books are an excellent reference for teachers of adult or VCE students who require skill development in preparing and writing assignments. The skills focused upon are equally relevant to teachers of ESL students or native English speakers who need to attend to their written comprehension and communication skills.

Research skills are playing an important role in the Study Designs of the new Victorian Certificate of Education. In all subjects students require the ability to comprehend, analyse and synthesise written information. As such, the development of research skills is an important task for teachers of all VCE subjects and these books provide a valuable resource.

Read, Note and Write takes a topic approach to the development of research skills. The topics, including Education in Australia. Australia's first inhabitants and The Australian climate, are all relevant to students living in this country and cover a broad range of interest and subject areas. Each topic has a skills focus which is taught through a variety of well-structured activities. The information is presented with clear explanations and graphics.

Plan, Write and Rewrite concentrates on very specific skills in the process of research and assignment writing. This process is broken down into four steps: Pre-Writing, Writing, Rewriting, and Pre-Preparation. The skills involved in each of these steps are identified and specifically taught. Once again the texts selected for analysis have an Australian focus, with varied, well-structured activities. This book also provides students with easy to read advice about how best to approach each stage of their assignment preparation. There is excellent cross-referencing to other books in the series.

These books are wide-reaching enough to be used by teachers as the basis for a unit or course in study and research skills. Alternatively chapters or activities could be selected to focus on specific skills, and the well-defined instructions and activities also allow them to be used independently by students. Both of these books make a valuable addition to a personal or school resource collection.

Reading English for Academic Study

Michael Long et al.
Newbury House 1980 $20.95, 168p.
Reviewed by Erica Code, AME Centre for Distance Learning, Melbourne.

As the title implies, this text focuses on the development of Reading Attack Skills such as skimming for content, skimming for specific information, prediction and guessing vocabulary from the context and semantic relationships.

The texts consists of eight units of work, each of which introduces a different reading skill. The units are based on written texts most of which are science or social science based, but are general enough to be both accessible and interesting.

Each unit begins by introducing students to the metalanguage of the reading skill to be developed in that unit. This is followed by two short exercises which provide the learner with an opportunity to practise the skill before applying it to the reading passage.

The reading passage in each unit is followed by two comprehension exercises, the first of which focuses on recognition of features which lend cohesion to the text such as relative pronouns and the words they refer to in the text. The second comprehension exercise involves various information retrieval skills, such as skimming, which are then expanded in later units.

Section Three of each unit focuses on grammar. The items are based on functions and notions appropriate to expository prose, such as comparison, contrast and classification. The practice exercises are preceded by an explanation, a deductive approach which suits adult learners, and they are presented in a wide variety of forms.

Each unit ends with a vocabulary section, which concentrates on the development of a general rather than subject specific vocabulary. The first exercise requires students to distinguish between the meaning of different forms of the same word (noun, verb, adjective, adverb etc), practice which I feel is relevant as it is often a source of error. The second vocabulary exercise is a cloze passage. The authors state that in addition to teaching some 150-200 new words, students will also learn word composition skills which they can then transfer to new words they encounter.

The reading texts themselves increase in length and discourse complexity as the units progress, until by eight they are at the level of complexity of text book prose.

Reading English for Academic Study is designed for intermediate level learners, and would be suitable for those with an ASLPR level of 2+ to 3. It contains an answer key, appendices of word affixes and stems, and a vocabulary index. One of the strengths of this text is the fact that new information is always introduced in one unit and reinforced in subsequent units. I feel that this text would be valuable for classes with a Study Skills focus.

A Short Course in Teaching Reading Skills

Beatrice Mikulecky
Addison Wesley 1990
$25.95, 165p.
Reviewed by Rita Bica, La Trobe University, Melbourne.

Beatrice Mikulecky's *A Short Course in Teaching Reading Skills* is a book designed for teachers of ESL; EFL; special needs students such as those with language processing disabilities; non-mainstream students and adult literacy courses.

This recent publication emphasises the importance of teaching reading skills given the growing need for English language learning all over the world. It proposes that a systematic instruction in how to comprehend texts is an indispensable element of language acquisition. This approach would benefit students in areas such as metalinguistic awareness; spoken and written expression and in their success in academic studies.

The book suggests that teachers should focus on specific reading skills. It is in the approach of teaching these skills that the essence of improving students' comprehension and thinking process lies. The explicit aim of a reading lesson should be the conscious process of comprehending or rationalising the text, rather than assimilating its content. Further, the students should be encouraged to work interactively and collaboratively on learning and applying these skills.

A Short Course in Teaching Reading Skills contains three parts and an appendix. The table of contents is well designed and the Introduction gives careful guidance as to what will follow. It also has an extensive bibliography and concludes with a list of cited classroom materials.

Part One looks at particular connections between teaching reading and literacy. It outlines the importance of the research being done in psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology in the area of the reading process in the first language. Much of that research has contributed to understanding of second language acquisition. Of equal significance is the ability of the teacher to recognise the students' conceptual frameworks deriving from their first language.

The frameworks include previous learning experience, knowledge of the world, cultural values, beliefs and native language discourse structure- implications that English teachers can no longer ignore. Their responsibility is to teach literate skills or the thinking processes about reading and writing. Literate skills are distinguished from literacy skills or the decoding and encoding skills.

Part Two is devoted to what students should read and why they should read particular literature. It maintains that reading should be pleasurable and that students' motivations can be boosted if they can actively select their reading material. It argues that there are a number of pedagogical and psychological reasons for this: students are more confident about their reading if it is related to a known topic; their choice of books would be guided by their own interest therefore they would feel more stimulated to read; self-selected books are legitimate reading materials; and finally self-selection by students can modify attitudes towards books. Students may be able to naturally integrate books into their general development.

In addition, this section presents a list of suggested books at all reading levels. Section II also emphasises the relevance of book conferences among students as a productive discussion activity as well as providing for the teacher. Finally the section contains a book response sheet, which is another device for teachers to find out students' responses to the reading material.

Part Three is the most extensive (128 pages) and is subdivided into eight sections. This part involves detailed description of selected reading skills and how to approach them. It has sample exercises of different levels of linguistic difficulty, and its overall methodology is designed for students who already have basic literacy skills. Teachers working with advanced beginners would find particularly relevant sections C and D, which deal with learning to read the global content of the text and to improve bottom-up processing respectively.

A Short Course in Teaching Reading Skills is a comprehensive source of ideas about expanding and applying reading skills. The author presents the connections between the second language reading process and the individual's cultural, psychological and linguistic background. In other words, reading is experiencing, in a broad literate context, the combination of past and present cultural experiences. The role of the ESL teacher is to make reading a free thinking, pleasurable activity.

Multilingual Word Processing

Tony Ganly, Jack Gilding and Peter Green
Statewide Multicultural Education Co-ordination Unit, Ministry of Education, Victoria 1989
$10.00, 97p.
Reviewed by Tony Lapsley, Holmesglen College of TAFE, Victoria.

As a small desk-top publisher in the field of language education, I welcome this excellent guide to multilingual word processing. The book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in communicating through the medium of print in languages other than English.

The book provides an extensive list of word processing software for a wide range of languages (one or two of which will send you to your Dictionary of Linguistics) written in Roman, Cyrillic, Greek, Semitic, Chinese-based and other scripts. Languages are listed alphabetically and matched with available software in columns for IBM-Compatible, Macintosh and Other. The Other category includes Apple II, BBC, Commodore, Xerox 8000. The chart is well set out and extremely comprehensive. Separate lists provide product descriptions and publisher and supplier details.

But *Multilingual Word Processing* is not just a book of lists. (Though even it were, it would still be an excellent resource.) The authors also provide a clearly written and useful introduction to the concepts and processes involved in word processing and desk-top publishing with particular reference to the needs of those working or wanting to work with languages other than English. This material is certainly accessible to those who have little or no background in computer use. A useful glossary is also provided. For those who wish to extend their knowledge, the authors have compiled an excellent bibliography of current material relevant to multilingual word processing.

The authors' aim was to "provide a comprehensive product listing of multilingual word processing products, as well as practical advice to people wishing to use personal computers to carry out multilingual word processing". They have certainly achieved their aim and, thus, have made a valuable contribution to multilingual communication in Australia.

Reading through this book I was constantly reminded of the incredible power we now possess for intercultural communication through the personal computer. I look forward to future editions of *Multilingual Word Processing* incorporating further developments in the field. This work is certainly worthy of support.

Multilingual
Word
Processing

Tony Ganly, Jack Gilding and Peter Green

A guide to using personal computers
for multilingual word processing

Featuring a comprehensive product listing
for most popular makes of computer.

Published by the Statewide Multicultural Education Co-ordination Unit, Ministry of Education Victoria

Learning to learn English: A course in learner training.

G. Ellis and B. Sinclair
Teacher's book $22.50, 154p. and learners book $17.95, 118p.
Cassette $14.00
Cambridge University Press 1989
Reviewed by Ruth Wajnryb, Sydney

If you give a man a fish. you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.

With this quotation from Confucius, Gail Ellis and Barbara Sinclair launch into the Teacher's book of the Cambridge University Press release *Learning to Learn English.* The quotation is an apt summary of the credo and philosophy underlying the authors' book - self-directed learning, learner autonomy, training for independence. Translated into contemporary TESOL terms it would read: if you teach learners a course of English, you give them a course worth of English. If you teach them how to learn English for themselves, you give them English for a lifetime. From any point of view, it makes sense. The more teacher-independent we can make them, the better. (Note, however, that teacher dependence *per se* is not a bad thing: if the learner, trained to make decisions about his/her learning, actively chooses from a range of options to be dependent on the teacher, then we still have self-directed learning).

It's good to see this type of materials coming onto the market. We saw Ken Willing's *Teaching How to Learn,* a product of Willing's research into the learning strategies and cognitive styles of second language learners in the Adult Migrant Education Programme. Now, Ellis and Sinclair's course in *Learning to Learn English* provides even more material and ideas (perhaps with a greater EFL focus), allowing those who believe in learner autonomy and self-direction to apply their ideology with great facility and support. It's one thing to share the credo; quite another to feel comfortable about its application.

The Introduction to the teacher's book espouses the theory and philosophy of learner training. It examines the **aims** (developing more effective and responsible learners); the **process** (focus on the how rather than the what), the **assumptions** (learners are individuals using different strategies at different times; learners who are informed about language and language learning are more effective learning managers); the **rationale** (learners learn when they are ready to learn; learning to use time outside the classroom releases the learner from teacher dependence); and the **origins** (learner-centred teaching methods, the concept of autonomy as a human right). The writers see learner training as a journey without instant magic but with long-term gradual solutions. On this journey, the learner and the teacher are seen as "partners in learning: the teacher is the language learning 'expert' and the learner the 'expert' on him or herself" (p. 10).

The course in learner training covers two types of learning strategies, metacognitive and cognitive. In metacognitive strategies, the learner is engaged in activities that require him/her to *reflect* on the learning process; while in cognitive strategies, the learner is involved in *doing* things with language and language learning materials. The marriage of the two types of strategies is crucial, the writers argue, for learner need both the ability to reflect on their learning as well as opportunity for active experimentation with their learning. Without reflection, they will never be truly autonomous. Without experimentation, they cannot apply the fruits of their reflection.

An important consideration in learner training, and one the writers must have had to consider carefully, is at what level they were going to pitch their course. Although wary of the danger of assuming that advanced learners have an advanced awareness of their learning strategies, they claim learner training is most effective at the lower-intermediate level. The learner then has enough language to be able to complete the activities as well as some experience as a learner to reflect upon, while still being relatively new to English, therefore having great benefit to gain from increasing their knowledge about language learning and about themselves as learners.

The danger area is establishing exactly at what point the learners' low level of English will get in the way of their being able to successfully manage the tasks. While one might argue that there is lots to be gained from the language point of view of their working on such tasks, my point is that from a *level* point of view, the material has to match up - too much challenge and the whole idea is counter-productive. Thus I am concerned in a few activities (eg. the awareness of register activities in the section on speaking (2.4); the text for a reading task in 2.5, step 6,) that the complexity of the listening task might block the attempt to recognise and respond to register. This problem of level - low-enough to be of great advantage but high enough to cope with the task - is a kind of double-bind which, in all fairness, the writers have in the main managed to negotiate with enviable success.

The course in learner training is neat, systematic, thorough, and easy to access. The framework is tightly and logically organised. In Stage 1, called "preparation for language learning", there are steps, each expressed as a personal question directed to the individual learner (see Figure One below). In stage 2, (see Figure One below) the focus

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is on skills training: here we have six skills areas with seven steps, again expressed as questions. The approach in the skills stage can be to work horizontally across the grid, concentrating on one skill at a time and applying the seven steps to that skill; or, alternatively, vertically, concentrating on a particular step/ question which is applied in turn to each of the skills areas.

Figure One

Framework for Learner Training

Keep a record of the learner training you have covered by ticking the boxes (✓) as you finish each section.

Stage 1 Preparation for language learning	
1.1 What do you expect from your course?	
1.2 What sort of language learner are you?	
1.3 Why do you need or want to learn English?	
1.4 How do you organise your learning?	
1.5 How motivated are you?	
1.6 What can you do in a self-access centre?	

Stage 2 Skills training	*How do you feel . . .?*	*What do you know . . .?*	*How well are you doing?*	*What do you need to do next?*	*How do you prefer to learn/practise . . .?*	*Do you need to build up your confidence?*	*How do you organise . . .?*
Skills	*Step 1*	*Step 2*	*Step 3*	*Step 4*	*Step 5*	*Step 6*	*Step 7*
2.1 Extending vocabulary							
2.2 Dealing with grammar							
2.3 Listening							
2.4 Speaking							
2.5 Reading							
2.6 Writing							

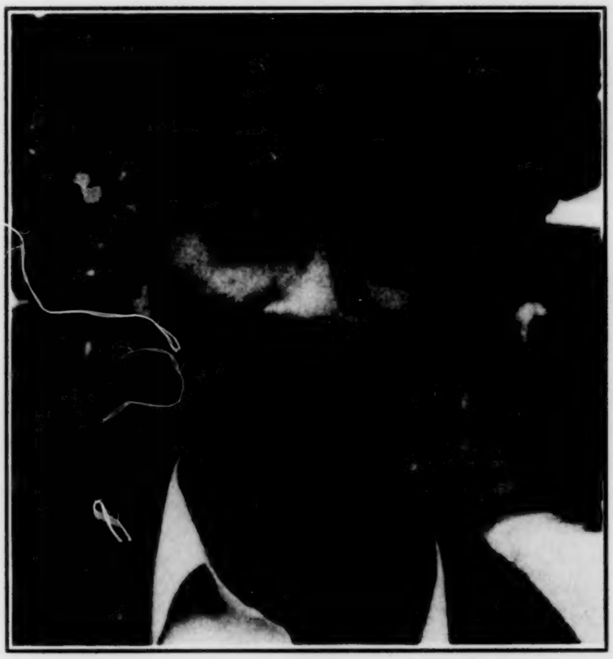
The teacher's book, as well as introducing the teacher to the relevant background in learner training, and explaining the framework on which the course is based, also provides back-up lesson guidance to aid the teacher new to learner training to the best way of using the activities in the learner's book. The learner's book is a neatly presented, visually attractive and user-friendly book that learners will enjoy using. There is also an accompanying cassette containing some of the input material (native and non-native speakers) and data used particularly, but not exclusively in the training of reflective strategies. While some of the illustrations and pictures in the book are British-looking (a bit inevitable, really), the writers have clearly gone to great lengths to provide language learning extracts and situations that are world-centric rather than UK- or Eurocentric. A welcome change. Another attractive feature of the book is the charts used for learners to record their own needs, priorities, aims and progress. There is also a set of symbols used to signify that a task will involve one of the following: pair work, group work, class discussion with the teacher, or a cassette recording. A further feature that makes the book a valuable resource is the annotated reading lists scattered through the teacher's book. These are divided into two sections: books that will allow the teacher to follow up areas of interest and supportive materials for learners for use in the classroom, in self-study or in the self-access centre.

Cont. ▶

As you make yourself familiar with the type of activities that Ellis and Sinclair are offering, it becomes very clear that learner training often amounts to letting learners into the clubhouse - teaching them what we as teachers already know about language learning, breaking down the guild a bit, de-mything and de-mystifying. The first time I introduced learner training into my teaching. I experienced almost a sense of embarrassment (should I be telling them this? Isn't this information the sort that helps the teacher to teach better but that the learner need not consciously know?) With time, though, and with the enormous interest and enthusiasm that learners demonstrated for being allowed in, I was sold on the approach. Ellis and Sinclair's *Learning to Learn English* is a bank of such activities that help to remove the layers of mystique from the subject matter of learning English. A few sample examples are: finding out about formal learning and acquisition, about analytical-style learners and global or relaxed learners (1.2); having learners know what teachers know about the value of predicting and strategies for helping one do it (2.3, step 6); finding out about and practising the micro-skills of skimming and scanning in reading (2.5, step 2); guessing in and out of context (2.5, step 6); talking about accents and getting to the root of inhibitions related to the perception of the sound of non-native speech (2.4, step 1); listening for specific information (2.3, step 2).

There are some strategies that I sense wouldn't work for me, neither as a language learner nor as a teacher training learning autonomy e.g. 2.1, step 5, where in acquiring lexis, learners are encouraged to aid memory with visual pictures. So far, so good. But I have a lot of trouble with an exercise that asks me to imagine Nelson on his column attired in an *apron*; or the Queen using a *dustpan* on the floors of Buckingham Palace. However, one could perhaps argue three counter points here, in favour of such an exercise. Firstly, and there is an irony here, perhaps this lexis will stick precisely because the concepts are just so preposterous. Secondly, it is *in the nature of learning strategies* that what works for one might not work for another, and teachers ought to be presenting a range of strategies so as to cater for a range of learners. Thirdly, evidence tends to suggest that just as we mother the way we were mothered, we tend to teach in the way we would prefer to be taught; therefore the teacher ought to be making a point of including strategies that she herself does not lean towards so as to accommodate the learners who are not mirrors of her own learning style. So, in my case, to be true to my principles, I'd probably have to go for the Nelson and Queen exercise, after all.

The course in learner training contained in *Learning to Learn English* is both learner-friendly and teacher-friendly. I predict teachers will pick it up, browse through it, get hooked and want to try it. In such an event, I advise them to turn immediately to p. 19 and follow the Introduction to the teacher's book to find sound guidance on implementing a course of learner training into their timetables. This can be done with both intensive and extensive programmes. A sample timetable is drawn up to assist the teacher to *incorporate and integrate* autonomy training with and within the content areas of language teaching. Included, too, are guidelines for lesson design as well as the very important notion of preparing learners for autonomy training. The great thing about this new title is that it gives teachers no more reason to delay any further. It's all here - the materials, the framework, the support, the programme. All that's wanting is the enthusiasm, and you'll have that once you've read *Learning to Learn English*.



TESOL RESOURCES

Sandra Bouwmans has selected and annotated the following list of materials on the teaching and learning of reading and writing in TESOL

TESOL in Context gratefully acknowledges the assistance of TESL Books, 305 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne in the task of compiling this list.

If you know any resources for either TESOL specialists or mainstream teachers of students who speak other languages, do send in the details: ***TESOL in Context*** would be pleased to list them in our Resources column.

Aldhamland, M and others 1986 *Science and the ESL Student* AGPS Language Education Branch, Canberra

Alshaw 1984 *Headwork 1-4* Oxford University Press

Alshaw 1990 *Headwork 5-8* Oxford University Press

Brosnan, D Brown, K & Hood, S 1984 *Reading in Context* NCELTR Macquarie University.
In the introduction to this book, the authors argue for the use of authentic reading material with beginners. The book provides a variety of models for reading tasks. Each is broken down into the skills that would be needed to successfully complete the task. Initial and follow-up activities are included to help learners acquire reading skills.

Brown, K & Hood, S 1990 *Writing Matters: Writing Skills and Strategies for Students of English* Cambridge University Press

Bruder, M & Henderson, R T 1987 *Beginning Reading in English as a Second Language* Prentice Hall New York

Cambourne, B et al 1984 *Process Writing with English and non-English speaking children in kindergarten classes - a report on research in progress* University of Wollongong

Canberra Literacy Program 1989 ACT Schools Authority Canberra

Carrell, P Devine, J D & Eskey, E (eds) 1988 *Interactive Approaches to Second Language Reading* Cambridge University Press

Christie, F 1990 *Literacy for a Changing World* ACER Hawthorn

Cleland, B & Evans, R 1984 *Learning English through General Science* Longman Cheshire Melbourne

Cleland, B & Evans, R 1985 *Learning English through Topics about Australia* Longman Cheshire Melbourne

Cleland, B & Evans, R 1987 *Learning English through Topics about Asia* Longman Cheshire Melbourne

Dubin, F Eskey, D E & Grabe, W (eds) 1986 *Teaching Second language Reading for Academic Purposes* Addison-Wesley Reading

Elliott, M 1984 *Students can write in their Second Language: An Approach to Writing in ESL Courses* Hodja Educational Resources Cooperative Richmond

Enwright, D Scott & McCloskey, L 1988 *Integrating English: Developing English Language and Literacy in the Multicultural Classroom* Addison-Wesley Reading

ESL/Literacy. Introductory Handbook 1985 ALBSU
An introductory handbook for tutors which is intended to offer some starting points for tutors who are new to literacy with adult L2 learners. It suggests a general approach, describes some useful teaching strategies and through the use of case studies illustrates how some of these strategies can be carried out.

Freedman, A (ed) 1979 *Learning to Write: First Language/Second Language* Selected papers from the CFE Conference Ottawa Longman

Green, Jenny *Making the Links* AMES
A video guide for inservice demonstrating one approach to teaching low oracy/low literacy ESL students. This Adult Migrant Education Program production funded by the International Literacy Year project will be released in early 1992. Enquiries: AMES Victoria, First Floor, 250 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne 3000.

Hamp Lyons, L 1987 *Study Writing* Cambridge University Press
This textbook is for learners at upper-intermediate and more advanced levels who need to write in English as part of their studies. Part 1 explores different aspects of organising information in writing, such as classifying, defining and describing sequences and cycles. Part 2 is concerned with structuring information and ideas in whole texts. Learners work through a range of tasks which enable them to progress from producing short pieces of guided writing to creating longer texts with less guidance.

Hoy, K (ed) 1988 *Access to Literacy* AGPS Curriculum Development Centre Canberra
A collection of articles written by teachers working with illiterate or semiliterate ESL students of secondary school age detailing strategies used to foster literacy skills in L2.

Cont. ▶

Johnston, J M 1990 *Content Points A B C* Addison-Wesley Reading. Students book & Teacher's book Sequential, high-interest activities in each level develop, strengthen and solidify basic concepts in science, mathematics and social studies. Reading passages progress systematically to higher analysis, synthesis and critical thinking.

Kightly, Sue 1990 *Reading and Resources to Guide Literacy Teaching* NSW Adult Migrant English Service PO Box 1222 Darlinghurst 2010
This resource has been developed to support the professional development of teachers of ESOL working with adult learners who have low oral proficiency (ASLPR 0 - 0+) and very limited literacy skills. The resource is divided into two sections: Theoretical Considerations and Practical Resources. The first section contains an introduction which highlights key issues of concern to teachers, an annotated list of references and discussion questions designed to encourage the use of the resource in local professional development or curriculum planning forums. The second section contains an annotated list of resources, examples of teacher-produced materials and discussion questions to guide materials development and evaluation workshops.

Literacy Work with Bilingual Students 1985 ALBSU
This manual has arisen largely from work with students who are fairly fluent English speakers and who are often found in literacy classes for native speakers. It is based on a project carried out in a number of classes in the Inner London Education Authority and thus each chapter provides many examples of what learners and teachers did on the project. As well as offering ideas and approaches, it provides sources and texts for reading and writing.

McArthur, B 1984 *Written Word* Oxford University Press
This is an English composition course for Students needing to develop a good written style in a school or university context. In the coursebooks, the guidelines of what is acceptable in written English are laid down and the students encouraged to develop a clear, logical style within them. As well as covering the basics of spelling, punctuation and grammar, students learn how to deal with sources, quotations, and how to achieve particular stylistic effects. Topics and themes selected as models are varied both in content and style. There is plenty of controlled practice leading on to free writing.

McLaine Trish Book notes in *Recommended Reading for Adult Literacy Students* Adelaide College of TAFE Sales and Publication GPO Box 1872 Adelaide
This is a review of fiction and nonfiction material available for use with L_1 literacy students. The books are considered in terms of their themes, style and language complexity. Teachers teaching L_2 learners literacy skills through literature may find this annotated bibliography useful when choosing material.

Motai & Boone *Strategies in Reading* Lingual House

Vaughan 1985 *Assessing Reading* ALBSU
Using cloze to asses reading skills. The pack contains information on what cloze procedure is, how it can help asses reading ability and when you would use it. Guidelines are given for preparing your own passages.

VCE Resource Collection 1990 Statewide Multicultural Education Centre Victorian Ministry of Education
The collection aims to assist teachers in the development of effective programs in VCE (Year 11-12) English, Australian Studies and Mathematics. Within the collection, there is a section which focuses on strategies to assist the literacy development of NESB students trying to carry out the various assessment tasks of the VCE.

Wales, M L 1989 *English as a Second Language in Schools: An Introduction for Classroom Teachers* Deakin University Press

Widdowson, H (ed) 1980 *Reading and Thinking in English: Concepts in Use*
Exploring Functions
Discovering Discourse
Discourse in Action
Oxford University Press Student's Books & Teacher's Books

Interchange: The Literacy Dimension of TESOL Journal of the NSW Adult Migrant English Service No. 16 October 1990 Curriculum Support Unit NSW Adult Migrant English Service PO Box 1222 Darlinghurst 2010
This issue of *Interchange* focuses on the issues raised for ESL literacy during the international Year of Literacy. Suggestions are made as to how literacy development can be fostered in L_2 when students have minimal literacy skills in L_1 and several teachers relate their experiences of teaching reading and writing in general English for Migrants programs, English in the Workplace programs and the Distance Learning Program.

Prospect: A Journal of Australian TESOL published by the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research for the Adult Migrant English Program devoted Vol 5 No 3 May 1990 to literacy. Articles reflect on what literacy is, theoretical underpinnings, the first national survey of adult literacy in English, current issues and research in the UK, teacher and learner roles, working with non-literate L_2 learners, genre-based approaches and the relationship between spoken and written language in literacy programs.
Vol 6 No 1 September 1990 included an article on Literacies as Sociocultural Phenomena.

Other relevant research journals include:
Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics
Australian Journal of Linguistics
Open Letter
TESOL Quarterly

Australian Reading Association Inc PO Box 78 Carlton South Victoria 3053 Tel: (03) 347 6951
The ARA Publication Catalogue provides an annotated bibliography which includes many items concerned with L_1 literacy.

Primary English Teaching Association PO Box 167 Rozelle NSW 2039 Tel: (02) 818 2591.
This publication list includes an annotated bibliography on books related to L_1 literacy.

TESOL TROUBLESHOOTER

When you are stuck with a TESOL problem and you are wondering what to do next, put it down on paper and send it to the TESOL Troubleshooter, c/- the Editor, 4 Ada St, West Preston 3072.

Thank you to the readers who have already responded to our offer and have sent in their problems. I am also interested in hearing from teachers who have used other methods to overcome problems covered in this column. By sharing creative solutions with one another - often disguised as a simple, commonsense approach, we can provide mutual support.

Our second mailbag has covered a wide range of concerns, and since this issue has a literacy focus, I have selected those most closely related to this theme.

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter

I'm sure that I won't be the only ESL teacher writing with this problem. Process writing in our school is one of the greatest causes of disadvantage suffered by ESL students. When the process approach to learning was first introduced, I considered it to be a wonderful innovation. It fitted directly with my philosophy about respecting and enabling students. What is happening in our school, and I believe from talking to lots of other teachers in other schools, is that the students are regurgitating the same old stories, the same old language and the same old mistakes.

How do I go about explaining to classroom teachers that there is a need for them to *teach* ESL students (as well as their English-speaking classmates) something about *how* to write well in English.

Disillusioned, Vic.

Dear Disillusioned,

Your concern is truly widespread. One of the saddest aspects of what you say is that the approach does have wonderful potential for enabling all students to become good writers. From my point of view you have raised one of the two major areas of concern regarding the process approach, and the next letter raises the other one.

Your letter would seem to indicate that teachers are not analysing the writing sufficiently and therefore cannot plan their language teaching in order to help students develop their writing. Some classroom teachers overlook the fact that ESL students do not have an extensive reservoir of English language knowledge upon which to draw. In an effort to avoid taking responsibility for learning from the student, some teachers are failing to teach.

My starting point has always been to present the teachers with whom I work with the facts - and nothing but the facts! This will require that you undertake an analysis of samples of the students' writing. If this can be done at a joint planning session, so much the better. Classroom teachers need these skills too, and one of the roles of many ESL teachers is to inservice other members of staff. Once it has been pointed out to teachers that there are specific needs, then planning to meed these needs becomes easier. You may need to model how you would present a lesson that would help students to develop the language required. One word of warning - beware of becoming the clinic/withdrawal teacher. It is important that the classroom teacher is involved in the whole process: Analysis - Diagnosis - Clinic.

Something else that you may want to draw attention to is how particularly able ESL students are past masters at keeping a low profile and making no mistakes. Risk-taking has not helped them in the past (no-one explained the why and how of their error and so they couldn't "fix" it themselves) and so they sensibly play safe. We need to keep a balance between extending these students and giving them the tools they need to be able to develop their writing. Modelling, wide exposure to different styles of writing and games or interesting activities that give students practice in recycling the language structures and vocabulary presented are all strategies that happen incidentally. **Our challenge is to make sure that they are planned for and tailored to the specific needs of our students.** One way into this is to identify one common error. On a simple matrix list: error, standard form (to be modelled, practised and used by students), activity, monitoring tool to help me know how well the students are handling the task and evaluation technique.

ERROR ____________________ TARGET FORM:

ACTIVITY: (including steps to follow)

MONITORING: (you may already have developed a standard form)

EVALUATION:

If you can show classroom teachers the benefit of tailoring their teaching directly to the needs of the students and give them strategies to use, the improvement in the standard of writing will be enough to keep teachers going. You might suggest a central file of activities designed to develop particular aspects of writing be kept, so all staff members can share with one another. That is where a standard form comes in handy. Try not to stay disillusioned.

Cont. ▶

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

I am working in the junior secondary department of a fairly large inner city school with a large number of ESL students. One major difficulty lies in the fact that our feeder primary schools teach process writing. Many of the junior students, especially the ESL students, seem incapable of writing anything but personal recounts or stories. How do we convince the local primary schools that students need the skills and experience to write in a range of other genres?

Poorly Prepared, S.A.

Dear Poorly Prepared,

Your letter presents me with a dilemma. On the one hand, I have enormous sympathy with your frustrations. I agree that students need the skills to write for a range of purposes. ESL students in particular, may have little or no exposure to or experience with the English conventions required for different forms of writing. On the other hand, I firmly believe that we learn best and in a more lasting way when we relate new knowledge to our previous experience and understandings and when we can see the relevance it has to our lives. (You may want to read the article by Bernadette Maher in the last issue of **TESOL in Context.**) Your concerns are also shared by many primary ESL teachers. Unfortunately, some teachers translate the *process approach to learning* into "process writing" which in turn can become nothing more than the old "creative writing" revisited. We also need to bear in mind the developmental nature of learning and that as teachers we must assess each student, whether we are teaching prep or year 12, and develop the necessary strategies to help that particular student to progress. If we indulge in buck passing, the only losers are the teaching profession and the students. The process approach, when properly executed, should expose students to the full range of genres and goes hand in glove with a cooperative approach to learning. A number of primary schools have extended the approach to reading, maths and science.

Viewed in a positive light, it would seem that you have a well-developed starting point from which to extend your students. You may find it best to utilise what they do well and use that as a springboard for developing the specific writing skills for the other genres.

Your concerns may be lessened by knowing that many primary teachers, both classroom and ESL practitioners, are aware of the necessity for extending students by broadening the range of purposes for which they write, and providing these experiences by setting a wider range of writing tasks. A personal response allows ESL students an equal opportunity to express new knowledge. The next stage is to prepare students adequately by providing them with the skills to express this knowledge in the appropriate written form. This is done best when teachers analyse the language demands of the writing task and give explicit information to students. Through this process students can make sense of new information in their own personal style before translating this knowledge into standard form. Pair or group work is a good way of expanding the English language repertoire to which students have access and this cooperative approach is becoming more widely used at both primary and secondary level.

If you can establish closer links with your feeder primary schools and encourage greater dialogue, some of these issues could be addressed. Please let me know how you resolve this.

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

My worry is that while my ESL students are all quite proficient in spoken English - they are all second phase learners - they have real trouble when expressing themselves in writing. How do I help them to move from the oral to the written form?

Worried, W.A.

Dear Worried,

This is a concern of many ESL and classroom teachers. The problem may be two-fold. Firstly, the conventions for writing are different from spoken conventions. Writing is clearly not purely speech written down. The second aspect worth considering is the range of communication aids we use in spoken discourse that are not available when we write - all the paralinguistics, intonation, stress and gesture. Sometimes ESL students are relying so heavily on these, that as teachers concerned with communication with and understanding students, we can fail to realise that they have difficulties with oral expression too. Many of us are regularly doing a fill the gap exercise when talking with and listening to students. We need to critically analyse what they are saying, how they are saying it and what they are not saying before we can be sure that our students are truly orally proficient English speakers. This would be my starting point.

If, as most teachers have found, your students require extension in their use of oral English, planned language activities would be the way to go. These would need to be in context, stress free, enjoyable and cover a range of registers. Friederike Klippel's book *Keep Talking* has some great ideas for language learning activities. If your students are in fact proficient English speakers, then the differences between spoken and written forms need to be made explicit to students. We may be guilty of expecting students to pick up conventions or assuming that they know them.

Cont. ▶

Actually comparing the appropriate written form with the oral expression helps students and can be an enjoyable exercise. It is certainly a necessary one. Students also need to have wide exposure to different writers and a literature based approach can help provide this. Again, the conventions each author is using should be made explicit to students. Here I am not suggesting dissecting to the point of destruction, but pointing out how the author has employed specific techniques in the writing in order to convey a particular message, feeling, mood or emphasis.

I hope these ideas help with this problem and if you develop any particular strategies that you would like to share, I would love to hear from you. Good luck.

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

I am working as ESL support in a small primary school and love my job. My colleagues are keen, conscientious and mostly party people. We have established a cooperative learning approach and try to model negotiation and consensus decision making as a staff as well as in our curriculum.

Our real area of concern is the number of ESL students who don't seem to join in fully. When given a choice of roles within a group many opt for the less demanding ones and rarely volunteer to be a reporter, recorder or clarifier. We really feel that we are doing everything we can to develop self-esteem and confidence in our students, but in this area we really need help.

Ideas Please, Vic.

Dear Ideas,

I was delighted to receive your letter and really encouraged that you are obviously writing as a representative of the whole staff - the way to go !!!

Your concern is one that was addressed as a recent inservice on ESL and cooperative learning conducted by the Catholic Education Office in Melbourne. It was felt that the problem may be rooted in the fact that ESL students may not have the language specific to certain roles. There may be a range of language functions to which they have not been adequately exposed or required to use. (Remember the functional/notional approach? - I think it has much to offer still.)

The process we used, and one you might like to try as staff, was to establish groups to work through various problem solving tasks. Develop tasks to cover a number of curriculum areas (general studies, maths, science). Choose roles within each group and those with the same role (eg. all observers) come together to predict what the language demands of their own role may be. Regroup and complete the task. Those with the same role then reconvene to compare the *actual* language used with the predictions made. When the inservice participants considered the language they had used they realised that many ESL students would be unfamiliar with the structures and that they had not been given specific modelling in order to become familiar with and confident in using this language.

eg.

In other words, you're assuming . . .	(clarifier)
Do we need to . . .?	(leader)
Firstly, we need to decide . . .	(organiser)
After we had decided what . . ., then . . .	(reporter)

The Collaborative Classroom by Susan and Tim Hill is a good reference with regard to the language demands of specific cooperative learning roles.

Having decided that this could be a major problem for ESL students, the participants then developed "clinic" type activities to give students the necessary practice with the language structures identified. A valuable resource is *Harrap's Advanced Communication Games* by Jill Hadfield. Some of the activities in this publication can be readily adapted for this purpose.

If students have sufficient experience, through *planned* teaching activities, to confidently assume the full range of roles then their proficiency should improve. An interesting point raised by one classroom teacher was that his ESL students were being disadvantaged because he realised that they couldn't interrupt easily in English. To overcome this problem (social and linguistic) he developed a game where students were required to interrupt one another before they could take their turn. Apparently his students love the game, he models increasingly complex ways of interrupting, using different registers, and his students are incorporating them regularly when playing the game. He has noticed that his English mother tongue speakers are becoming more creative in their use of language too, thus providing models for ESL students. This is slowly filtering into the students' written language, particularly when they are using direct speech.

Schools can be exciting places when a really positive climate is established and it seems that you have worked hard to establish just that. Maybe you could share some of the successful strategies you use with other readers. Please drop me a line and keep up the good work.

PUBLICATIONS EXCHANGED

Cross Currents An International Journal of Language Teaching and Cross-Cultural Communication published by the Language Institute of Japan
Vol XVII No. 2 1990
Vol XVIII No. 1 1991

EA Journal A Publication of the ELICOS Association of Australia
Vol 9 No. 1 Autumn 1991

Guidelines A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers published by South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Language Centre
Vol 12 No. 1 June 1990
Vol 13 No. 1 June 1991: a special issue on group work and large classes.

OutReach National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research Newsletter December 1990 Vol 2 No. 1

Prospect A Journal of Australian TESOL published by the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research for the Adult Migrant Education Program Australia
Vol 5 No. 3 May 1990
Vol 6 No. 1 September 1990
Vol 6 No. 2 May 1991
Vol 6 No. 3 July 1991

NEWS

1. **RELC Regional Seminar**
   The South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Language Centre is holding a Regional Seminar on *Language Teacher Education in a Fast-Changing World* in Singapore on 20-23 April 1992.
   Enquiries: The Director (Attention: SEMINAR SECRETARIAT) SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 30 Orange Grove Road, Singapore 1025, Republic of Singapore. Tel: (65) 737 9044. Fax: (65) 734 2753.

2. **Pedagogical Relationships between Adult ESL and Literacy Project**
   The National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University and the Language and Literacy Centre at the University of Technology, Sydney are collaborating to promote the sharing of theoretical and pedagogical developments and further develop cooperative working relationships with the aim of developing more clearly articulated learner pathways between the various providers of adult ESL and adult literacy.

Expected Outcomes

i. Identification of areas of commonality between the two providers. Such areas could include professional development needs, curriculum development issues, methodology.

ii. Documentation, through case studies, of good practice in each of the fields of adult ESL literacy provision.

iii. Identification of good practice in coordination of service delivery of the two program areas.

iv. Identification of barriers that prevent the effective cooperation between the two areas - these may be structural, professional or may relate to perceptions of 'territory'.

v. Proposals for the establishments of mechanisms for further collaboration between providers.

vi. Recommendations for enhancing cooperation and program articulation between the two providers at the structural and professional levels.

vii. Although not stipulated in the brief, the researchers would present papers on their findings at conferences and other suitable forums, and CATALPA* would disseminate information. The dissemination of the research results would be significant for adult literacy and ESL providers, teachers and teacher educators.

Contact people are Jenny Hammond, NCELTR, Macquarie University Tel: (02) 805 7673 or Anna Miller, Research Assistant, Tel: (042) 674 388.

* CATALPA is the Coordinating Agency for the Training of Adult Literacy Personnel in Australia.

An ABC of Course Design: a questioning approach.

Ruth Wajnryb

This article presents a schema for course design to help teachers prepare courses to meet the needs of their students. It is a step-by-step approach to course design based on asking (and answering) the right questions in the right order. The schema can be applied to any language teaching or ESP course, such as for English for Communication, English for Business, English for Hotel Receptionists, English for Nurses, English for Computer Programmers, English for Pre-tertiary Students, English for Students on a Working Holiday, to mention just a few.

The sequence of course planning elements may be represented diagrammatically, see Figure 1 below:

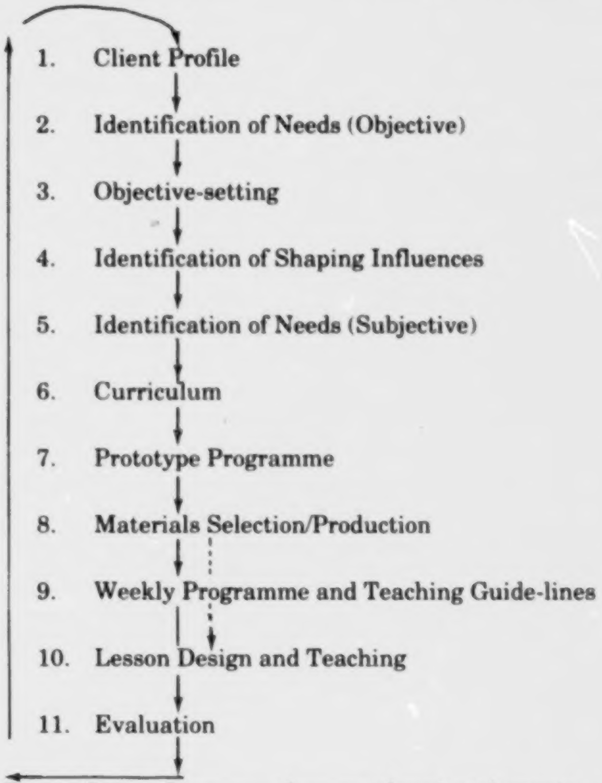

1. Client Profile
2. Identification of Needs (Objective)
3. Objective-setting
4. Identification of Shaping Influences
5. Identification of Needs (Subjective)
6. Curriculum
7. Prototype Programme
8. Materials Selection/Production
9. Weekly Programme and Teaching Guide-lines
10. Lesson Design and Teaching
11. Evaluation

Figure One - Sequence of course planning elements.

A step-by-step approach to course design.

Step 1. The Client Profile

The aim here is to build up a profile of the average or typical client student. It helps to "personalize" the profile by giving it a name.

Sample Questions:

- Who is the learner?
- How old is he (or she)?
- How long has s/he been in Australia?
- What previous courses have been studied?
- What level(s) of proficiency does the learner have, according to the four skills?
- What is the learner's L1? Are any other languages known?
- Has English been studied before? In what way? For how long?
- Is the learner living with or separated from his/her family?
- Will the learner be working while a student?
- What are the learner's expectations - about processes and outcomes?

Step 2. Identification of Needs (Part I)

The aim here is to identify the learners' objective language needs. This phase is product-oriented: we are trying to ascertain what terminal target-language behaviour the clients need/want to acquire.

Sample Questions:

- What do they need English for?
- What purpose(s) do they have for studying English?
- What do they want to do with their English?
- Where/when/in what contexts does their English let them down?
- Is there agreement or discrepancy among learners and between learners and teacher about what is needed and how it should be acquired?

Step 3. Objective-setting

Here the aim is to think in terms of aimed-for performance and hoped-for target language goals. In language-learning terms, we are thinking of skills: what does the learner hope/need/strive to be able to do in/through/with English by the end of the course?

Sample Questions:

- What macro-skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing) are being aimed at?
- How are these to be prioritized?
- Is this likely to need to change during the course?
- For each macro-skill, what micro-skills can be identified as being component parts? What cumulative process can be mapped out in advance?
- Can these micro-skills be ordered in the sequence in which they may be presented/practised?

Cont. ►

Step 4. Identification of Shaping Influences

The aim here is to identify the various shaping influences that will impact upon the successful progress and outcome of the course. These may be positive or negative influences; where negative, they may be seen as "constraints". The aim is to create a programme of study that will be real rather than ideal; it should capitalise on facilitating factors while also taking into account the constraints or less-than-perfect conditions that may affect the learning context, at worst impeding success.

Sample Questions:

- What shaping influences may be identified?
- Are these facilitative or constraining?
- Are they external or internal?
- Where constrainers are identified, how might these be overcome/restrained/neutralised/harnessed/avoided/ reduced etc?

Step 5. Identification of Needs (Part II)

This is a second phase of the needs identification, begun in Step 2, above. It comes at a later stage in the course design process because information gleaned from the objective setting and the identification of shaping influences (Sections 3 & 4) may help to inform it. Here we are dealing with subjective rather than objective needs and are concerned more with "process" than with "product". We are also looking at the learner's transitional (rather than terminal) behaviour.

Sample Questions:

- What does the learner need to know in order to learn?
- What does the learner need to do in order to learn?
- How will these content/skills areas to approached?
- Is there anything that the learner needs to unlearn in order to learn?
- Does the learner need to learn how to learn? How might this be approached?
- Where a metalanguage is needed, how might this be provided?

Step 6. Curriculum

Here we are concerned with both the context (what?) and the methodology (how?) of the course.

Sample Questions:

- Given the information we have collected above, what implications can be drawn for the content of the course?
- How will this content be organised? What will be the point of departure?
- How will the content be contextualised?
- How will the content be sequenced?
- How (using what methodology) will it be taught? What assumptions underpin the choice of methodology?
- Is the methodology consistent with learner expectations? If not, what provisions have been made?

Step 7. Programming: The prototype programme

Here we are concerned with designing a prototype programme that will serve as a model or blueprint for the weekly programmes. As the prototype programme begins to take shape, there are some check questions (see below) that may be applied to it.

Sample Questions:

- Does the prototype programme reflect the course objectives?
- Does it reflect agreed-upon processes?
- Does it reflect agreed-upon priorities?
- What percentage of the lesson content is focused? What percentage unfocused?
- Is it realistic? Does it address/cope with identified constraints?
- Does it take advantage of facilitating factors in the learning environment?
- Is it well-sequenced?
- Will it allow for re-cycling?
- Is it well-integrated?
- Is it well-balanced?

Step 8. Materials

This section deals with the actual lesson level or chalkface of the course design.

Sample Questions:

- Are there commercial materials available or will the materials need to be produced?
- If both, what proportions will operate?
- What need is there for authentic materials? How might these be obtained?
- Is there a possibility of using text that is learner-generated?
- What guidelines for lesson planning will be used?

Notes:

i) Provision should be allowed for curriculum changes to be made during the course: sometimes learners' needs that were not visible or realised earlier emerge later in a course; sometimes learning pace is slower/faster than expected.

ii) There should be some provision for on-going student feedback and course-final evaluation.

Ruth Wajnryb is a freelance TESOL consultant, teacher trainer and materials writer based in Sydney. She has had extensive teaching experience in Australia, Europe, the Middle East and South America.

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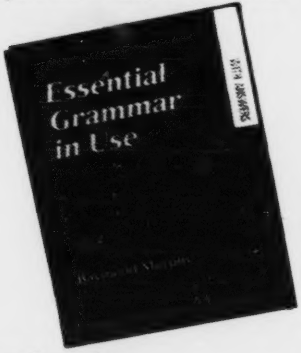

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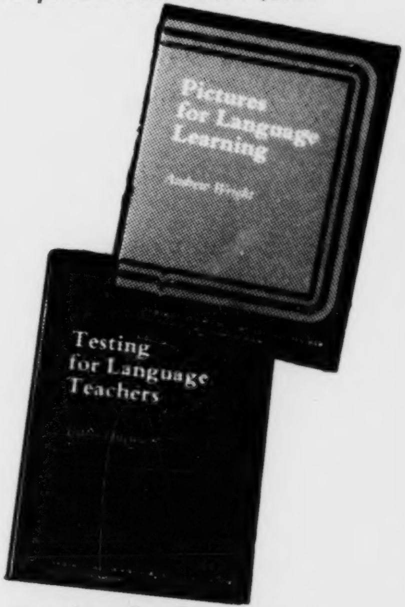

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Collaborative Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Journal of ACTA Australian Council of TESOL Associations

ISSN 1030 8385 Vol 2 No 1 1992

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TESOL in Context has seven sections, which are:

1. *TESOL Issues*, an interactive column where contributors write about current concerns or responses to previously published articles;
2. *TESOL Perspectives*, which contains two or three articles of 1000–2000 words on issues, curriculum strategies and policies;
3. *PracTESOL*, which contains five or six articles of 2000–3000 words on good ideas and applications, classroom tactics, materials and units of work and so on;
4. *TESOL Talk*, where practising teachers talk about their work and experience;
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All references to books, articles and other sources are to be identified at an appropriate point in the text by name of author, year of publication and pagination (e.g. Cleland and Evans, 1988: 5). For references in an appendix titled References, list all items cited in the text alphabetically by author, and for each author, by year of publication, e.g.

Cleland, Bill & Evans, Ruth 1987 *Learning English Through Topics About Asia Teacher's Book* ESL Topic Books Longman Cheshire Melbourne

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* Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Editorial

Welcome to the third issue of *TESOL in Context*. The theme of this issue is collaborative approaches to teaching and learning. During recent years ESL providers have moved more towards a collaborative approach to teaching, where the focus is on mainstream and ESL teachers working and planning together.

This has been an important step forward in assisting ESL students to cope with the demands of mainstream study areas. ESL teachers have also been adopting collaborative approaches to learning. Research shows that it is when teachers require students to interact with each other using collaborative learning techniques that most higher order cognitive and linguistic discourse is observed. Students asked each other harder questions and challenged each other's answers more readily than they did in interactions with the teacher (Garcia, 1988).

In **this issue**, we introduce a new rubric **TESOL Issues** which we hope will be an interactive column for the discussion of current issues and a forum for responses to previously published articles. In the first column Alan Williams raises the issue of politically correct nomenclature.

Most of our articles are related to the theme of collaborative approaches: team/support teaching, small group work and cooperative learning.

TESOL Perspectives begins with Ruth Wajnryb discussing collaborative approaches to supervision of trainee teachers. Kate McPherson looks at how small group work provides valuable opportunities for exploratory talk, which is important in the development of the learner's communicative competence and understanding of subject matter. Mitch O'Toole discusses the language and learning needs of students in science classrooms.

In **PracTESOL**, Penny McKay looks at how the *ESL Framework of Stages* can be used by ESL specialist teachers and mainstream teachers to develop integrated curriculum plans for short and long-term purposes in English Language Centres and Schools and in primary and secondary schools. Penny draws on Jeanette Widmer's example of a middle primary level unit of work developed from a *focus wheel* from the *Framework*.

Mary Mifsud and Elina Raso take up where Alison Standish left off in our last issue and discuss practical strategies for developing a cooperative learning classroom and the advantages of this approach for ESL learners. They specify student roles and suggest how to plan the English language inputs for students to carry out the roles. Sandra Bouwmans and Barbara Mahle outline a unit of work that was collaboratively developed by a teacher of Maths and an ESL teacher in a secondary Language Centre.

Allan Goedecke discusses a model for teaching writing to adult students using a collaborative process approach. Maeve Doyle and Janet Reinhart offer practical advice for developing team teaching. Chris Davison warns of eight fatal flaws in team teaching and suggests strategies to avoid them.

In **TESOL Talk,** Jenny Barnett talks to Deb Rees about her current experience and understanding of collaborative approaches to teaching and issues relating to its successful implementation.

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TESOL Reviewer and TESOL Resources provide details of practical and relevant publications and videos.

TESOL Troubleshooter offers some suggestions in response to questions about collaborative approaches to teaching and learning.

The themes planned for the forthcoming two issues are:

1. *Assessment in TESOL*, and
2. *Teaching and learning spoken English*.

Contributions on these themes in particular and on other relevant topics should be forwarded to the Editor as soon as possible. The co-editor for our next issue is Tom Lumley of the NLLIA Language Testing Centre at the University of Melbourne.

References

Garcia, E 1988 *Effective Schooling for Language Minority Students* (New Focus No.1) National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education Washington DC

see also:

Garcia, E 1991 *Education of Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students: Effective Instructional Practices* National Centre for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning Santa Cruz ■

Glossary

AMEP *Adult Migrant English Program* is the title of the Commonwealth-funded English-language teaching program for adult immigrants in Australia.

ASLPR *Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating* scale which gives an indication of how well an ESL speaker can listen to, speak, read and write English and which is used to place learners in classes of similar levels of English in the Adult Migrant English Program and other adult settings. It is a 12-point scale between 0 (zero proficiency) and 5 (native-like proficiency). A score of level 1 is roughly minimal survival proficiency, 2 would be minimum social proficiency, 3 would be minimum vocational proficiency and 4 would be vocational proficiency. Level 3 would approximate the bare minimium proficiency needed to take part in other education and training programs.

EAP *English for Academic Purposes/Study Purposes/Further Study* are specific courses of TESOL for students intending to enter senior secondary, TAFE or tertiary courses in various fields. They focus on content and skills for cognitive academic language proficiency.

EFL Students *English as a Foreign Language Students* are overseas students in non-English speaking countries who are studying English. Some EFL students visit Australia to undertake courses in English.

ELICOS *English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students* is the term for short courses for overseas fee-paying students in Australia.

ESB *English-Speaking Background* is the term used in Australia to describe people and communities who speak English as their first language.

ESL Students *English as a Second Language Students* are very diverse in terms of their life, language, cultural and learning experience. Their needs are similarly diverse. Primary and secondary ESL students include:

- children beginning school in Australia at the usual commencement age who have had little or no exposure to English, being recently arrived immigrants or Australian-born children whose home language may be a language other than English, in which they may have some literacy;
- children beginning school in Australia at the usual commencement age who are acquiring English and another language simultaneously at home;
- students starting school in Australia after the usual commencement age without any previous schooling in any country, with little or no English and little or no literacy in their first language, but possibly with work or military experience;
- students starting school after the usual commencement age but with severely disrupted schooling;
- students who arrive from overseas with about the equivalent amount of schooling in their first language as their peers have had in English. Some may have had some experience of learning English as a Foreign or Second Language overseas;
- students (many of whom are Australian-born) who have had the major part of their schooling in Australia but who need assistance to meet the English language demands of mainstream classes;
- students from non-English speaking backgrounds who have specific learning difficulties.

ESL students vary in their proficiency in English. Five levels of proficiency in English for non-English speaking background students were identified by Campbell and McMeniman in their 1985 report *Bridging the Gap* for the Commonwealth Schools Commission:

- *Level 1 Minimal or no English as a Second Language proficiency*
- *Level 2 Elementary ESL*
- *Level 3 Intermediate ESL*: the spoken English of these students gives an impression of problem-free fluency, but their reading proficiency is below their age level and their written work shows problems with task comprehension and written expression. Some secondary students may have stronger literacy skills than oral proficiency.
- *Level 4 Advanced ESL*: students at this level can use English effectively in listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks within a limited range of topics and conceptual complexity, but not for all school tasks. They are intellectually able, but have not yet mastered the language of abstract thought and specific subjects.
- *Level 5 Very Advanced ESL*: these students can use spoken and written English effectively for a very wide range of topics and conceptual complexity and can handle the subtleties of humour, innuendo, cultural references and the like in English.

ESP *English for Specific Purposes* are courses teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages for specific occupational or study purposes, such as English for

Nurses or English for the Hotel Industry or English for Engineers.

First-Phase Learners, Second-Phase Learners, Third-Phase Learners. While there are as yet no standard definitions or uses of the terms, TESOL writers in some Australian education systems use them. *First-phase learners* are beginners in English and include learners who have yet to reach fluency and confidence in basic, interpersonal, communicative uses of English. *Second-phase learners* can at least communicate at a basic interpersonal level in English and can function to some limited degree in social and formal educational settings. Some writers distinguish only these two phases, others distinguish a *third phase* where learners are developing greater competence in spoken and written English for academic use in educational settings. However, the terms *second-* and *third-phase learners* may sometimes be defined to include NESB students who speak fluent conversational English much like their ESB peers in mainstream classes and whose linguistic and cultural competencies and identities may be unstable. They may have been born in Australia and had most or all of their schooling here and know little of their first language.

IELTS *International English Language Testing System.* A set of tests developed recently by Australia and the British Council and used for selection and placement of EFL/ESL students, especially overseas students, in tertiary education.

LBOTE *Language Background Other than English* is used to describe people and communities whose first language is a language other than English and their children. (see TESOL Issues article in this volume: What's in a Name ?)

LOTE *Languages Other Than English*, a general term used in Australia partly because many languages are used daily for significant purposes in Australian communities and cannot be considered foreign. Some school systems use the term positively to describe children who come from homes where another language is spoken.

LOTEB *Language Other than English Background* is used to describe people and communities whose first language is a language other than English and their children. (see TESOL Issues article in this volume: What's in a Name ?)

L_1 first language

L_2 second or subsequent language

Macro-skills or **the four macro-skills**: the useful term used by many Australian TESOL-trained teachers to refer to listening, speaking, reading and writing. The ordering of the skills is also significant in TESOL thinking.

NESB *Non-English Speaking Background* is widely used to describe people and communities whose first language is a language other than English and their children. (see TESOL Issues article in this volume: What's in a Name?)

TEFL *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* is used to describe teaching English usually as a branch of study rather than a language of instruction to overseas learners in or from non-English speaking countries.

TESL *Teaching English as a Second Language* is the widely used term for teaching English to non-English speaking background immigrants and their children in Australia, especially at school level, to empower them to participate in Australian society and public life. ESL students here are mostly taught in English.

TESOL *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* covers both TESL and TEFL and the whole range of language and sociocultural contexts in which teaching takes place. It recognises that learners may speak more than one other language or that they may be acquiring English simultaneously with another language. It also recognises that the dominance of each language in the learner's repertoire may change over time. ■

TESOL Issues

What's in a Name? To be NESB, or LBOTE, or LOTEB? That is the question.

Alan Williams looks at terminology used to describe non-native speakers of English.

When I started teaching in 1972, migrant English teachers worked with migrant children. Some people still referred to these children, and their families, as *New Australians*, but use of this term was on the wane, due to its association with the assimilationist philosophy that had coined the phrase.

The term *migrant* was seen as more neutral, more descriptive. However, I soon saw that an apparently neutral term could be turned into an epithet when my Greek speaking students of a few years' residence in Australia used it derisively towards my recently arrived Greek speaking students. The term *migrant* soon acquired pejorative tones, as had the terms *refugee* and *Balt*, which both began as apparently descriptive terms in the late 1940s. Perhaps the wider community had picked it up from my Greek speaking students!

More likely, its pejorative tones came to us via movies and TV from the United States, where migrants are those who have moved from one part of the country to another, usually the disadvantaged and the dispossessed. Beside that, increasing numbers of refugees were coming to Australia, and the term did not apply to them. Anyhow, it was not long before enlightened people were looking for a less negative term to describe people who had migrated to Australia, and *ethnic* became the buzz-word for a brief spell. Maybe its adoption by the fashion industry condemned it to a brief but spectacular *season*.

More likely, it was general recognition of the absurdity of suggesting that some people in the community had exclusive possession of ethnicity. Like all good fashions, it came, went and lingered on in some circles, and is still is use today in some quarters.

By the late 70s the term *Non-English Speaking Background* had been coined as through early 80s came into general usage amongst professionals working with such people.

Although it has been slow to spread into broader usage amongst non-specialist teachers and others in the wider community, it has become more prevalent in the media in recent years, and is now more widely used and understood in the community.

The appropriateness of this term to describe the clients of ESL programs, along with their families and others who have migrated to Australia, has been widely accepted. It is accepted and understood nationally, and has been used in a plethora of official documents and reports – from Galbally in the late 70s, Campbell in the mid 80s to the 1991 National Policy on Language and Literacy. It has not become a term of abuse, it has become increasingly understood and is useful as a descriptive term on which better understandings of the nature of the task confronting NESB in a variety of contexts can be based.

But this view is not unchallenged. Even from its earliest use, there have been suggestions that the *non* suggests a deficit view of the people that it describes. The implication is that they are lacking something. Other suitable terms have been sought, and one that has been adopted is *language background other than English* which results in the acronym LBOTE, or LOTEB, if you arrange it as *language other than English background*.

This view has gained some acceptance, and I find my colleagues from ATESOL(NSW) on the ACTA council referring to *language background other than English students* whilst myself and others reply with comments about *non-English speaking background students*. In the recent ACTA response to the draft National Statement on English Curriculum we used the term *language background other than English*, and the acronym LBOTE.

Has the term *non-English speaking background* had its day? Is it time to change the term that has gained widespread acceptance and understanding?

I think not, and what's more I think that any change in our basic terminology has the potential to inhibit our impact as a profession and set back some of the good work done by ESOL teachers, their organisations and others with an interest in multicultural education.

Here's why I think this:

1. The term *non-English speaking background* carries no more an implication of a deficiency in a person or group of people than the term *language other than English background*. *Other* can conjure up as many (or as few) negative connotations in listener/readers as *non*. I don't see any inherent difference between the two terms.
2. The term *non-English speaking background* has not become a pejorative or abusive term, despite over ten years of widespread use. It is widely used, accepted and understood in public discussion. The resultant acronym *NESB* is also starting to be recognised and understood, and likewise has not developed widespread negative connotations. This raises the question of *why fix it if it isn't broken?*

   There seems no point in opting for a change if there is no significant problem. The other point to consider here is that just because a term is descriptive when it is adopted as a label, it does not mean that it can not be used derogatively, as the history of *refugee*, and *migrant* demonstrate.

   I doubt that *language background other than English* would fare much differently from *non-English speaking background* in this respect, but I don't have the same confidence about the acronym LBOTE.
3. My final reason for not wishing to change terminology relates to the efforts of ESOL teachers and their professional associations. A lot of hard work has been done by a lot of people to raise the awareness of mainstream teachers, educational administrators, politicians and the general public about the way that immigrant children and the children of immigrants, and others whose home language is not English *(OWHLINES?)*, and a lot more work has to be done.

   We have won some and we have lost some. We have made some inroads in places and started to get somewhere. In order to continue this we need to have a common terminology, and it is important that we do not waste our energies re-doing some of the work already done. New terminology takes a while to catch on. There is also the danger that our credibility drops as others see us as prone to fads by wanting to change our terminology for reasons that are not apparent. Surely there is enough of that around already without us adding to it?

To conclude, I would like to highlight the real point of the exercise. I was surprised when I arrived in Canada in 1985 to begin a year's teaching exchange. My students and their families were referred to as *New Canadians*, and it took me some time to feel comfortable with that term.

However, despite (what I considered to be) their quaint terminology, the mainstream teachers that I dealt with had a much keener appreciation of the situation facing their *New Canadian* students than many of their Australian counterparts, there was a much better appreciation of what it means to go to school in a different language and a different culture. The main point is that the understandings that go with the term are more important than the term itself.

I am not saying that how we refer to our students does not matter, it clearly does. I just do not think it is worth the effort and potential difficulties of changing our basic terminology now, when there is not a serious problem.

Maybe I am wrong, and ESOL teachers across the country and their students are crying out for a better label, I do not think they are. If that is the case, let your representatives on state associations know, and write in and tell us what you think in these pages.

But at the same time, let's get on with the task of giving others a clearer understanding of what it means to be a non-native speaker of English in an Australian classroom, and of what sorts of support such students need.

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The Light Globe Has to Want to Change: Supervision as a Collaborative Process

Ruth Wajnryb writes about the advantages of collaborative supervision for both the trainee teacher and the supervisor.

Supervision – A Bad Track Record

Rare is the teacher who experiences no anxiety at the thought of being observed teaching. Partly, this comes from the performative connotations of *teaching* – standing up, delivering – and of *observing* – being seated, passively listening. Partly, too, it derives from the non-interactional nature of the observed lesson: in extreme cases, teacher and observer play a mock-pretend game: the teacher pretends that the observer is not present; the observer pretends to be invisible.

Partly, as well, the anxiety stems from the conventional link between supervision and judgement: words like evaluation, inspection, probation, assessment all cluster around a similar negative connotation. There is a sense, too, of the supervisory process serving a gate-keeping function: a power play exists affecting people's vested interests; the observed lesson is a gate through which one may or may not pass, with the supervisor making decisions about a teacher's professional life and future.

It is little wonder that research into perceptions of supervision over the last two decades has been highly critical of this authoritarian model of supervision. In a study of 2500 teachers Wiles (1967) found that only 1.5 per cent perceived their supervisor as a source of new ideas. Cogan's research (1961) revealed supervisors as an active threat to teachers, endangering their professional standing and eroding their confidence. In a book whose central thesis is expressed in its title Blumberg (1980) found that supervision was experienced by teachers as the playing through of an irrelevant organisational ritual.

Clearly, there is a gap here between the real and the ideal worlds: in the real world, teachers generally see supervisors as, at best, an annoying irrelevance; in the ideal world, the notion persists that trainees, beginning teachers, as well as experienced teachers, all have a lot to gain from one-to-one supervision.

The problem, it has been suggested (Acheson and Gall, 1987), may lie in the implementation of supervision rather than in the notion of supervision per se. The trend today towards a more humanistic approach to supervision may well reflect the belief that supervisory style is a key component in the degree of receptiveness that teachers feel; and certainly there has been a lot of research into different supervisory styles and their impact on supervised teachers. However, while supervisory style is clearly crucial, as it is in all helping relationships involving a close interpersonal connection, it is my contention that style is not the only source of potential difficulty.

Whose Needs?

The traditional link between supervision and evaluation is, doubtless, a key factor in the way supervision is perceived. Another factor is that supervision has traditionally arisen from needs outside the teacher: certification in training requires a pass in practice teaching; continuing employment in some circumstances requires probation; promotion is based on evidence of sound teaching. Being supervised, then, is linked to externally imposed safeguards that are more like quality control measures than educative processes.

My suggestion is that if supervision were more responsive to the needs of the teacher than those of the supervisor (or the system that the supervisor represents), then supervision would become more educative. Supervision would then follow the trend of teaching in becoming more learner-centred, where the learner is in this case the teacher.

When supervision is perceived and constructed as a truly educational process – that is, as one-to-one teaching, which improved instruction as the desired outcome – the entire tenor of the supervisory relationship is revolutionised. One way this has been achieved in mainstream educational circles is through the model of clinical supervision.

Clinical Supervision – A Collaborative Alternative?

A collaborative model of supervision draws its key phases from the notion of clinical supervision, developed at Harvard by Cogan and Goldhammer in the sixties. This has been adapted and moulded in different directions by different institutions and researchers (e.g. Sergiovanni and Starratt, 1988; Smythe, 1984). Clinical supervision has been the subject of a great deal of educational writing and research, and only an outline may be included here.

At the heart of the process are three key phases. Each of these involves the teacher and supervisor, firstly in a planning conference, then in the observed lesson, then in a feedback conference (see Figure 1).

In the planning phase, teacher and supervisor negotiate an agenda for their forthcoming contact. It is the concerns of the teacher, not the supervisor, that becomes the focus of discussion. The two also negotiate a data collection mechanism to be used during the observed lesson, for a key aspect of clinical supervision is the analysis of objective data as an ethnographic means of understanding classroom events (see for example, Wajnryb, 1992).

These ethnographic tools, borrowed from anthropology, are a most appropriate means of

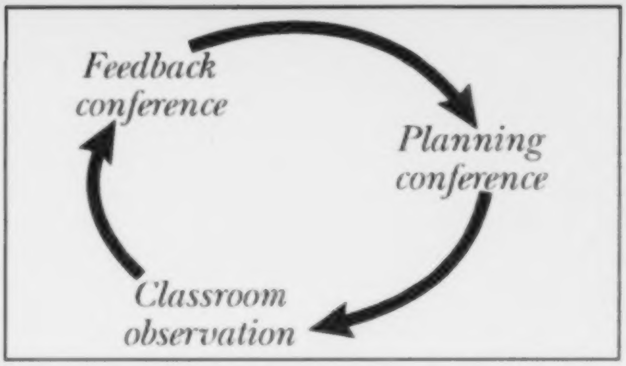

Figure 1 – The three phases of the clinical supervision cycle (from Acheson and Gall, 1987).

accessing the culture of the classroom and the processes of teaching and learning.

For example, the teacher may be concerned to find out more about patterns of interaction in the classroom, perhaps worried that students are not getting equal shares of the teacher's time. It may be decided that the supervisor will chart these patterns from a seating plan, during the lesson. The feedback conference in this case would take as its point of departure the analysis of the collected data.

What is avoided is the rush to judgement and the haste to find solutions, especially solutions that have their origin in the supervisor. Much more time is spent in the collaborative analysis of data and the development of the ability in the teacher to interpret data validly. During this discussion, the teacher will be engrossed in discovering more about their own classroom than they could have from teaching alone.

In a sense, having at hand the data from their own teaching releases them to view it with new eyes. Interpreting and evaluating come from within, as do the formulation of alternative strategies. In a sense, the feedback conference becomes the planning conference for the future lessons. The thesis is that the discoveries made *by* the teacher *for* the teacher are in the long run more effective than those imposed. Not only does it empower the teacher with a healthy autonomy of judgement; it also has a far greater chance of being implemented than would decisions that come from without.

In this process, certain key elements predominate:

- the concerns that govern discussions about teaching are teacher-initiated;
- the mechanisms for discovery are ethnographic: a key role of the supervisor is to act as the agency for the collection of data;
- the two – teacher and supervisor – collaborate in the analysis and interpretation of data;
- the formulation of alternative strategies is interactive and negotiated;
- the goal of the overall process is improved instruction as initiated and framed by the teacher.

Contrasting Two Models

It is simplistic, of course, to cast two models of supervision as directly oppositional in character, and the truth, as with most things, often occurs in stages along a continuum. Bearing this in mind, nonetheless, there is something to be gained through the exaggeration of juxtaposition, and for this purpose of clarity, the two models have been here described in bipolar terms.

Figure 2 elaborates these contrasts between authoritarian and collaborative models of supervision (see also Wallace, 1991:110). A key element is that the agenda of the supervisory process is teacher-initiated. This makes the process teacher- (rather than supervisor-) centred. The purpose is teacher growth and development, as contrasted with the quality control orientation of the authoritarian model. The decision making-process in the collaborative model is democratic and solidarity-orientated, as distinct from the authoritarian, hierarchical and asymmetrical relationship of the traditional model.

Criteria for evaluation of teaching are based on observable evidence, gleaned systematically and openly from the classroom, as distinct from the often ad hoc, unsystematic and essentially fascist approach of the older model, where it is the supervisor's expertise (or perceived expertise) that is called on as arbiter. Stones (1984), for example, pleads for the use

***Figure 2** – Contrasting Models of Supervision*

Issues	**Traditional**	**Collaborative**
Agenda	● Supervisor's concerns ● Supervisor-centred ● Imposed	● Teacher's concerns ● Teacher-centred ● Negotiated
Purpose	● Quality control	● Teacher development
Goal	● Approval	● Autonomy
Decision-making process	● Authoritarian	● Democratic
Evaluation criteria	● Expert's subjective criteria	● Systematically collected observable data
Tenor of feedback	● Confrontational	● Collaborative
Participant roles	● Supervisor tells, teacher listens	● Teacher talks, supervisor engages in 'helping behaviours'
Models of teaching	● Prescriptive	● Descriptive
Communication	● Directive	● Interactive
Perceived agency of change	● Supervisor	● Teacher

of a formal corpus of pedagogy as the source of wisdom about teaching, rather than the idiosyncratic appeal to supervisory catch-phrases like "my teacher's mind tells me".

The feedback exchange, which traditionally has within it an element of confrontation, where the supervisor tells while the teacher listens, is replaced by a much greater emphasis on interaction, with the post-lesson conference being a part of a three- stage cycle (blurring sometimes with planning for the next lesson). The vital role of the supervisor in the feedback exchange is to provide a mirroring effect for the teacher. Many of the skills and strategies relevant to this are related to counselling: affirming and validating, hearing, supporting, clarifying.

Too often the traditional role of the supervisor has been to say "This is what is wrong. This is how to fix it". In the collaborative model, the supervisor helps the teacher to find out about their own teaching, helps to make links between causes, processes and outcomes, and helps the teacher work out viable alternative strategies.

Essentially, collaborative supervision is interactive, rather than directive, with the teacher, rather than the supervisor, being perceived as the agency of change.

An old joke asks "how many social workers does it take to change a light globe?" and responds "only one, but the light globe has to want to change". This can as easily be applied to teaching and supervision.

The energy, direction and motivation for change is within the teacher. In this cast of players, the supervisor is the skilled helper, one whose behaviour is characterised by a concern for the teacher, an interest in their growth, a facilitation for the helping process, and a willingness to take a low-key, off-stage role in a play whose central protagonist is the teacher.

More gentle and less prominent, the skills of collaborative supervision are in many ways more complex and more difficult to implement than those of traditional supervision.

While supervision in the more authoritarian sense calls on the notion of "superior vision", in the more collaborative model it calls on other aspects of the vision metaphor: sight, to see what is actually happening; insight, to understand its significance; foresight, to see what could be happening; hindsight, to see what might have happened; and second sight, to allow what might have happened to happen next time (Stones, 1984).

Certainly more subtle, and ultimately more rewarding.

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Talking Behind Our Backs: Unmonitored Small Group Interaction

Kate McPherson discusses how group work provides valuable opportunities for exploratory talk or talking to learn,

This paper will cover the following areas:

- a brief consideration of our expectations of learner-learner interaction;
- a description of a particular example of learner-learner interaction;
- an examination of the findings with reference to future practice;
- ideas for future research with the primary aim of presenting a convincing case for regular reflection on and analysis of classroom interaction.

Learner-Learner Interaction

As a large proportion of the target language input comes from other learners, the need for greater awareness of the nature of this input can be argued in at least two respects. The first is based on Krashen's assertion that input is crucial in second language acquisition. The second is that teachers, course designers and methodologists can learn from observing how learners interact and analysing what they do with language. Careful observation of how learners interact will not only illustrate how second language learners can learn more from one another than they think they can, but it will also provide the teacher with ideas and information necessary for future planning.

Small Groups: A Setting for Learner-Learner Interaction

A teacher exploits several different patterns of social organisation in the classroom; selection of one over another is strongly influenced by the focus of the learning activity. The use of small groups is considered to be particularly effective for many learning tasks. Furthermore, attention has been given to a psycholinguistic rationale for its place in second language learning. Long and Porter (1985) give five pedagogical arguments in support of group work.

1. Group work increases language learning opportunities

In a lockstep class the actual speaking or active participation time each learner has access to is minimal. Admittedly, group work is not an instant remedy for this problem, but it certainly does go some way towards redressing the balance.

2. Group work improves the quality of student talk

Often the interaction in a teacher-fronted or lockstep class is tightly structured, unnatural and follows strict conventions.

There are many instances in small groups where the language used is very natural, and is therefore not at variance with language used in real life. Furthermore, such face-to-face communication involving a small number of participants mirrors the usual setting for conversation.

An important aspect of the improved quality of talk is the fact that learners are not restricted to parroting isolated sentences or drilled, perfect responses. Rather they can take the opportunity to develop cohesive and coherent discourse, as well as assuming roles which in the lockstep class would have been the teacher's domain. Nunan (1989, p 86) takes up this point of flexible language use:

> learners are required to put language to a range of uses, to use language which has been imperfectly mastered, to negotiate meaning, in short, to draw on their own resources rather than simply repeating and absorbing language.

By having to draw on their own resources learners are deciding for themselves what they need and want to say. Additionally, as Hatch (1978, p 404) states:

> ... language learning evolves out of learning how to carry on conversations ... It is assumed that one first learns how to manipulate structures, that one gradually builds up a repertoire of structures and then, somehow, learns how to put these structures to use in discourse. We would like to consider the possibility that just the reverse happens. One learns how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed.

3. Group work helps individualise instruction

The ways in which one group will use language or approach the expression of certain concepts will obviously differ from the approach taken in another group. The participants in each group are using different ways to focus on what they consider to be of importance to them. In a lockstep class, presentation of what, for some learners, is new information, is tried, tested and known for others.

Group work is not an easy solution for coping with classroom differences, but, because it does allow learners to work on different materials suited to their needs, or on the same materials but at varying speeds, it is a step towards meaningful individualisation of instruction.

4. Group work promotes a positive affective climate

Some learners find the prospect of offering accurate and perfect chunks of what is often a perplexing second language very daunting. Performing in this way in front of an audience with the all-knowing teacher seen as a judge adds considerably to the burden.

If learners are experiencing this kind of stress, it is extremely unlikely that there will be much progress made in their language development. It is also rather naive to believe that language proficiency is evidenced by self-display in front of spectators. Barnes (cited in Long, 1975, p 218) gives an empathetic description of the positive supportive environment that can be offered by a small group:

> An intimate group allows us to be relatively inexplicit and incoherent, to change direction in the middle of a sentence, to be uncertain and self-contradictory. What we say may not amount to much, but our confidence in our friends allows us to take the first groping steps toward sorting out our thoughts and feelings by putting them into words. I shall call this sort of talk exploratory.

Releasing learners from the restrictive expectation that everything they say in public must be accurate, polished and complete, and offering a more accommodating learning environment does allow valuable opportunities for the development of personalised, creative talk. However, groups can only offer this secure, positive learning environment if some careful thought has gone into their formation:

> Experience suggests that care needs to be taken regarding the size, manner of formation, structure and composition of the groups used, and over the activities performed in them. Unless teachers allow either friendship, interest, or sociometric grouping, for example, they *run the risk of imposing as arbitrary a composition on the small groups as that which prevailed in their lockstep class.* (Long, 1975, p 219; my emphasis)

Additionally, when the teacher joins a group the learners can see the teacher producing language which contains repetitions, false starts, meandering sentences and let-me-think-a-moment structures. Not only does this present a useful model, but it also allows the learners to see the teacher operating in a different register and taking on a different role, perhaps that of collaborator. This kind of shared experience can lead to the learners seeing the teacher as more approachable.

5. Group work motivates learners

For the reasons stated above, and because of the variety group work offers to a lesson, it would not be unreasonable to assume that group work motivates learners. Learners are likely to push themselves more or try to experiment with language in a small group, rather than in a whole class activity.

This Study

It was decided to make a video recording of a usual class, that is, one which had not been alerted to the fact that anything in particular was the focus. The intention was to have a recording of what happened in a normal lesson, without any extra pressure on the learners from the idea that they had to be doing certain things in certain ways at certain times. Using a portable video camera, a colleague recorded a forty-five minute segment of the class. He recorded the input and process components of the task, concentrating in the second part on the groups I was not participating in.

It was decided to observe and analyse what happened in the groups I was not observing or participating in by:

a) identifying kinds of contributions in learner-learner interaction;

b) examining the learners' approach to the task they were asked to do;

c) observing differences in dyad and triad interaction.

Method

1. The class

The students were in a level 5 ELICOS class – which is around 2 on the ASLPR rating scale. There were eleven students in the class.

2. The task

Input/Stimulus: The first phase of the lesson centred on a warm-up, teacher-led discussion on dreams. This was followed by consideration of a short reading passage taken from *Meanings into Words: Upper Intermediate* (Doff, Jones, Mitchell, 1987) which described one of Carl Jung's dreams. The text was accompanied by a diagrammatic representation of what was experienced in the dream. Students had their own copies of the text and diagram. Figure 1 gives the text (without the associated diagrams).

Jung's Dream

Here is an account of a dream by the psychologist Carl Jung:

I was in a house I did not know, although I felt it was my house. I found myself in the upper storey, where there was a kind of salon with fine old furniture in early eighteenth century style. I was surprised that this should be my house, and thought, 'Not bad'. But then it occurred to me that I didn't know what the lower floor looked like, so I went downstairs. There everything was much older, and I realised that this part of the house must date from about the fifteenth century. Everywhere it was rather dark. I went from one room to another thinking, 'Now I really must explore the whole house.' I came upon a heavy door, and opened it. Beyond it I discovered a stone stairway that led down into the cellar. At the bottom, I found myself in a beautiful vaulted room that looked extremely ancient. I looked at the walls and realised they dated from Roman times. The floor was made of stone slabs, and in one of these I discovered a ring. When I pulled it, the stone slab lifted, and again I saw a stairway of narrow stone steps leading down to the depths. These too I descended, and entered a low cave cut into the rock. Thick dust lay on the floor, and in the dust were bones and broken pottery, like the remains of a very primitive culture. I discovered two human skulls obviously very old and half disintegrated. Then I woke up.

***Figure 1** – Text of Jung's Dream*

3. Process

The students worked in small groups (3 x 3, 1 x 2) discussing the dream and its significance. Four questions were given to guide their discussion, and these included options for talking about their own significant dreams if they were not inspired by the Carl Jung piece.

4. End product

The students were working towards producing a piece of expository or descriptive writing entitled Dreams.

5. Control interaction

Two adult native speakers were given the text, diagram and questions. Their discussion was video-recorded so that appropriacy and achievability of the task could be examined. This was done after the class.

Findings: Analysing the Video Data

Identification of Kinds of Contribution in Learner-Learner Interaction

1. Initiation of interaction

- by asking a *direct question* either to the whole group, or to a nominated member of the group. For example, in Group 1, after a slight lag phase, where all three were busily checking through their texts and underlining specific items, Grace began by looking directly at Masa and asking, 'Do you have any idea about this?' Eunice directed her gaze towards him too and did not make any attempt to respond herself.
- by *claiming the floor* through statements conveying personal viewpoints. For example, in Group 1, Masa began by saying, 'Maybe I think ... he thought he was getting old ...' In the dyad, Kitja also began with a hesitant start: 'Maybe he wants to know what it was ... the house was ...'
- by assuming a *leadership role* and *delegating* specific tasks to others in the group. For example, in Group 3, Naoko asked questions of the other two and often focused their attention on the text and diagram.
- *non-participation* was seen as a covert way of getting others to initiate or contribute to the interaction. For example, in Groups 2 and 3, Grace and Mari waited to see what others contributed before they offered anything themselves.

2. Participation in interaction

As expected, not everyone participated equally in the interaction. The following contrasts between the contributions to the warm-up discussion and what happened in the small groups were noted.

- Learners who had actively contributed in the whole class short warm-up exercise readily took on leadership roles in their groups Additionally, they showed an awareness of involving others in the interaction.
- There were some learners who had not participated in the warm-up exercise at all, who performed very well as group leaders, for example, in Group 2, Naoko was very active in offering her opinions and trying to encourage Mari and Makiko to offer theirs.
- There tended to be more equal participation, and a slightly more thorough discussion in the dyad than was observed in the triads where there was sometimes a performing pair and a spectator.
- Contributions tended to be fragmentary statements of ideas and impressions. There did not appear to be much continuity of expression or overall cohesion. Such features were also apparent in the control native-speaker interaction. However, the poor quality of the sound recording prevented detailed analysis of much of the data.

3. Indication of non-understanding

- In Group 1, Masa described his interpretation of the picture and Grace gave him plenty of encouragement through her supportive use of 'Mmm' and 'Uh-Uh', whereas Eunice appeared more detached as she checked information on her paper. But she was the one to interrupt Masa for clarification:

Masa	It shows all the world ... all our life.
Eunice	So, do you mean... that he's quite rich?
Masa	No, just normal.

- In Group 2, Lily seemed to be asking her group for confirmation that she was on the right track, but she did not get any response. She was describing the room at the top of the picture:

Lily	The company is all right ... he likes to work there, but ... in, in ... deep inside it's not all right ... The company is not like he wanted ... It's describing his job.

(This last sentence was very tentatively articulated and directed specifically to Grace but there was no feedback at all. Later, however, there was more involvement.)

Grace	... maybe he moves about house to house...
Yi-Hsuan	But I think maybe he lived in this house before ... in his past life.
Grace	So you mean... ?
Lily	So you think born and born again... ?
Yi-Hsuan	Yes.
Lily	Reincarnation – yes?
Yi-Hsuan	Yes. (Laughs)

- In the dyad, Tusk rode over Kitja's interruption. In this example, Kitja provided a mistaken analogy:

Tusk	The lower he goes down, he finds simpler things: simplest, simplest... maybe he wanted to see the conscience of humans...
Kitja	Ahh ... primitive humans ...
Tusk	Like ... I mean ... not appearance, but mind (emphatically tapping his heart)
Kitja	Oh ... mmm ...

More frequent and assertive indications of non-understanding had been expected. It was clear, from facial expressions at least, that contributions from some group members were falling on fallow ground, yet no overt response was offered to inform the speaker of this.

Class observation of such recordings could provide a useful follow-up learning resource. Learners could then be asked what they were feeling at a particular time, what they had wanted to say but could not or did not, or how they could have made what they were saying easier to comprehend.

Some of the reticence observed could be attributed to the presence of the video camera. On the other hand, there seemed to be some evidence of female eagerness to please a male partner by readily accepting what he says. In Group 1, Eunice and Grace appeared unnaturally docile in front of Masa. Further analysis could show that perhaps they were not confident enough of their own grasp of the situation to challenge his.

4. Use of non-verbals

The more effervescent members of the class such as Lily, Yi-Hsuan and Masa, frequently used gestures to emphasise and support what they were saying. They clearly illustrated the link between personality and body language. Some learners, like Kitja, indicated with twists and taps of a hand (usually holding a pen) that they were either ready to say something, or that they realised it was their turn to say something, but they did not really know what they wanted to say.

Restrained head-shaking or nodding were observed as learners focused on what other learners were saying. This was common, even for the more restrained members of the class.

5. Learner roles

Learners who assumed leadership roles in the groups were not always the ones whom the teacher would have expected to take on that role, or who would have been nominated by the teacher. It would be useful to record such behaviour over a number of lessons to assess emerging patterns, and perhaps to intervene if there is no rotation of responsibilities.

Once leadership roles had been taken on it was interesting to note how the other group members readily followed that lead.

Approach to Task

In each group there was a clearly observable lag phase during which papers were arranged, notes were made and thoughts organised before the participants started talking to each other. There were varying degrees of comfort with the length of this silent period.

Generally, a careful, considered approach was taken to the discussion. The learners embarked on a detailed analysis of the topic, exhausting one line of thought before proceeding to the next topic. They were obviously not hurrying to complete the task in the shortest time possible.

Both the control group and the learners did what was asked of them, turning to the questions only when they had exhausted one line of enquiry.

Generally, the questions did not appear to restrict the interaction. Indeed, they added many of their own questions, readily expanding on those given.

The control group was particularly interesting here because the perspectives of the participants were directly opposed. One person was very suspicious of the whole thing and doubted the veracity of the dream description. The other had a very positive response having experienced similar dreams herself. They had an animated conversation and made little progress past the first question in ten minutes.

The control group referred to their own dreams to support the perspective they had adopted on this dream, but the learners hardly used personal information at all. Additionally, in their writing, the learners chose to write on Jung's dream rather than use one of their own dreams. Having been able to observe their interaction, it is possible not only to understand why they chose this alternative, but also to have a clearer idea of what went into the perspective they presented.

Differences in Dyad and Triad Interaction

It is difficult to be conclusive here because of the many preconditions which affected the quality of the dyad interaction. Kitja and Tusk have known each other for some time, they are used to each other's peccadilloes and they are both interested in psychological issues. These factors enabled them to talk for longer stretches, to allow longer pauses between contributions and to respond appropriately to body language cues.

The Control Group

This part of the observation provided the biggest surprise. The potential value of such a recording as an introductory model or as input for post-activity discussion had not been anticipated. In this particular case, the initial dismissive response from one of the participants (as evidenced by her suspicion of dream analysis), provides a very useful language model.

It releases learners from the expectation that they must have a profound explanation of this dream; a negative response is permissible, but it needs to be expressed so that others can respond, and interaction develop.

Relevance of Findings to Future Practice

Classroom Management

Analysis of such video material can inform decision-making on the formation of learner groups. In turn, the observation of these groups can provide valuable data for the drawing up of learner profiles and assessment of learner progress. The data may also impact on the timing allowed for specific group activities in future lessons.

Learning Activities

The video data showed that learning materials must be flexible in terms of the response required from the learner. The primary aim of the materials in this instance, is to stimulate a response rather than to restrict a response which could have been made. There is enough material on the tape to provide meaningful input for subsequent lessons – a factor which illustrates the value and appropriateness of learner-produced materials providing the focus for particular learning activities.

Teacher Reference

As a teacher-reference document, the video data is particularly useful for approaches to error analysis as well as inspiring ideas for alternative approaches to particular tasks. For professional development purposes, the material provides an example of classroom practice which may be used to verify or challenge personal theoretical standpoints on specific issues.

Self-Access

Making such video material available to learners on a self-access basis could prove to be very worthwhile indeed. Different focus areas could include evaluation of one's own performance, interpretation of one's own and others' body language, and seeking alternative methods of expression.

Future Directions for Classroom-Based Research into the Effectiveness of Learners Working in Small Groups

This study has clearly shown for me the importance of making such recordings and observation a normal part of classroom procedure. If so much time can be spent on the thoughtful planning of learning activities, and in turn on the execution of specific tasks, it may be argued that time also needs to be spent on looking closely at how those tasks were approached, and what language was used. Teachers and learners have a great deal to gain, for example in terms of ensuring appropriate course content, by observing and evaluating the work in which they are cooperatively involved.

This study has highlighted the need for further research in the area of group work. Areas which deserve analysis include:

1. Accurate assessment of how interaction proceeds in groups – by looking at such factors as changes in interaction over a prolonged time span, effect of topic and task on interaction.
2. Reasons for particular groups being successful – in what ways did they succeed? are there conditions which can be replicated in other groups?
3. Most effective group arrangements – are dyads better than triads? What types of activities are better suited to dyads? Do learners do a significantly greater variety of things with language when working with one other student?
4. Effective use of native speaker interactions as models or follow up – is there any effect on learner performance? Do learners focus on the same interaction features as the teacher?

Conclusion

This study showed that when small groups of learners engaged in communicative tasks, with their production unmonitored by the teacher, they not only did more than expected in terms of the scope of their discussion, but they also approached the task in ways which had not been anticipated by the teacher. Such factors need to be noted for at least three reasons:

1. learning materials must provide for flexible responses;
2. specific language needs should provide the input for subsequent lessons;
3. finished products can be assessed with a clearer idea of how they were tackled.

Observation and analysis of classroom interaction provide tangible evidence not only of what is being done, but what needs to be done.

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Both Bridge and Barrier

The Potential and Problems of Science for the Second Language Learner

In this article Mitch O'Toole attempts to open up the potential for language development implicit in science classrooms while at the same time taking into account the learning burden which the specialist style imposes.

Studies in science and technology are a common destination for students from non-English speaking backgrounds at a number of educational levels. This article explores some of the potential for general language development implicit in science activities and sets out some of the difficulties that the specialist style characteristic of science can cause for a wide range of learners. The use of conceptually coherent sets of language exercises is put forward as one way out of the consequent conundrum of potential benefit and actual difficulty.

Takeoff

Do you remember a film called *Romancing the Stone*? There is a scene where the heroine, with reluctant hero in tow, walks into a nest of drug smugglers in Colombia's interior. Luckily the drug baron is a fan of the heroine's writing and agrees to help the hapless duo. There follows a high spirited escape. Our hero and heroine are crammed into a high powered four wheel drive, driven by the cocaine exporting fan himself. He drives madly towards a river, chased closely by the pursuers. Our reluctant hero is quite sure that they are all going to get a rapid baptism, followed by an even more rapid funeral. However, our romantic-pulp loving driver activates a radio transmitter and, before you can say "cocaine makes you crazy", a metal ramp rises out of the river bank. The jeep hits the ramp at precisely the right speed, and sails over the river.

Our ever thoughtful drug baron pushes the button again. The ramp moves up into a vertical position. Whammo! The pursuers ram headlong into a small steel wall. End of chase.

"What is he going on about?" I hear you ask yourselves. "What has a deliberately B-grade Hollywood offering got to do with education?" Actually it has quite a lot to do with it. Science is like that little steel platform. When the platform angled out over the river it became a bridge and over went our heroes. When it stood upright it became a barrier to halt pursuit.

Well-taught science is an activity based study, and these activities represent one of the most fertile contexts for language development that is available to teachers. Science enjoys a relatively high status among students. Science is seen as real. It is seen as useful. It is seen as important. Students want to study science, at least until they become more acquainted with it! Science is made up of practical activities which are carried out by students who are working in groups. Very often these groups are made up of students with different levels of ability and language competence. These groups work together to reach the solutions to problems which exist on the bench in front of them. Many of those things which are important in language acquisition are already present in a well taught science class.

However, science is also characterised by a formal specialised style of English, far removed from the language of playground and shops. If the activity base is science-as-bridge, the specialist style is most definitely science-as-barrier. The style is a historical artefact which arose as scientists adapted the standard dialect to suit the needs of their emerging study. The style is more than merely a matter of jargon. There are good reasons for the characteristic selection of its particular features. However, it is clear that it is the source of many problems for a wide range of students. These problems seem most obvious among students who do not speak the standard dialect of English, but they affect a much wider range of people.

This paper is an attempt to tease out some aspects of both the great potential and the many problems which science holds for students. It is written from the perspective of a science teacher who has gradually come to see that issues of language are inseparable from good specialist teaching. As such it may be useful for language specialists seeking to teach language in context, and for specialist teachers looking for a way out of the context/communication conundrum.

The Language Potential of Science Activities

Science classes should be characterised by an immediate "hands on" involvement with concrete objects. The students use these objects to explore, hypothesise and to test their hypotheses. This is an ideal context in which to expand and develop students' language as they talk together about the substance of their learning. Within these discussions there is room for the use of most types of language and the students' language options can be enlarged towards a more formal style of expression. Science activities can be used as the hooks from which to hang an experiential, communicative form of language learning.

This process is assisted by students' initial perceptions of science. When students begin studying science, they are almost self motivating. This initial thrill fades for most students. However, some residual interest usually remains. This is a very positive foundation upon which to build.

The activity base of science is traditionally expressed through the use of small group based "experimental" work. Small groups of students, working together, trying to solve specific problems with shared equipment. It is fairly common practice to mix the members of these groups. This is often done to try to ensure that every group gets to the end of each activity! Whatever the motivation, the effect is to generate mixed ability groups which must work together to successfully complete a task. The combination of mixed abilities and tasks which carry a high probability of success is ideal for language development. I have often seen students with little competence in English successfully complete activities with native speakers. The NESB student makes a real and valued contribution to the completion of the task, and in the process acquires new vocabulary and experiments with a number of structures. The focus of the group is most often upon the task, and so the language learning often seems incidental. This does not make the context any less powerful.

Development of the students' speaking skills need not remain incidental. There are a variety of spoken activities which can directly encourage the development of science skills and concepts, while at the same time, introducing or reinforcing particular language skills.

Games can be used to reinforce concepts or skills, while at the same time encouraging task-based conversations which provoke predictable language forms. For example, rummy-based card games can be devised for chemical formulae, or basic circuit construction or food chains. Board games can be tailored to particular science units. In both cases, the table talk provoked by the game is predictable and repetitive, without provoking the howls of "BORING!" that drilling the same patterns would produce (O'Toole 1990).

Verbal activities can be readily designed for units of work. These too can introduce and reinforce patterns which are demanded by the activity. And all of this happens in a language-rich context which the students see as valuable. Examples of these kinds of activities can be found in Freer and O'Toole (1990). This provides a language conscious primary science course. However, a number of the activities (or indeed whole units) are useful in the lower secondary school, or at intensive language centres.

Science activities also provide a lot of scope for developing students' writing. An integrated approach to this was developed by Bill Cleland and Ruth Evans. Their approach interweaves speaking, listening, reading and writing but its main aim is to develop reading and writing skills within what may be called "educational English". The approach involves building a reading passage on a visual presentation. This reading passage is analysed, extended and then used as background to a written passage created by the students themselves. The approach milks the science activities for their writing potential. Their strategies are described in detail in the teacher's book associated with Cleland and Evans (1984).

The Difficulties of Scientific Language

The scientific style of English arose in response to particular needs on the part of its users. It is still used for those purposes, both in the laboratory and beyond it.

Students are asked to communicate through writing. They are asked to revise, extend and remediate by reading other people's writing. Science teachers ask students to write for three basic purposes. We ask them to write to produce records of theoretical information, reports of practical work, and to write in assessment of their acquisition of the concepts and skills to which we have exposed them.

Theoretical information is a synthesis of the laboratory work which has preceded it. If duplicated sheets are distributed, such information can be a *reading* task. It can be a *copying* task, if the students are asked to transcribe the notes from the board. It can be a *writing* task, if students are asked to prepare their own notes from resources provided to them.

Practical work is the basis of science and practical reports are the basis of scientific writing. In practice, the amount of writing demanded in practical reports varies. At one extreme are the fill-the-gap worksheets which require very little connected writing and at the other are reports which are made up of several pages of pupil's prose. There is a statement of the purpose of the activity (an *aim*), a description of the activity itself (a *method*), description of the things observed during the activity (the *results*) and an explanation of the meaning of the observations (a *conclusion*). The different parts of the report can be given different names, or separated as the responses to different questions. However, whatever they are called, the distinctions between the sections are important. They serve different functions and are potentially addressed to different audiences. The method and the results are ostensibly intended for fellow students, or the student herself at a later date. The aim and the conclusion are more clearly intended for the teacher as audience. Similarly, the former pair are descriptive while the latter are explanatory.

Writing is also used for assessment in science. This occurs in examinations and assignment and project work. A brief perusal of examiners' reports, practical reports or written assignments indicates that all is not well with writing in science classes.

Clear and accurate practical reports are the key to writing in science. Science is about encountering the world, analysing our experience of it and coming to a new understanding concerning it. The distinction between description and explanation is crucial to this process and clarity within each is essential to successful synthesis. However, this does not mean that secondary students should be expected to write in the particular style used by professional scientists and textbook writers. They will need to be able to get meaning from versions of this style, but they do not need to produce it themselves. They need to develop receptive mastery of the style but they may not need to achieve productive mastery. In fact, such an expectation can impede students as they grapple with the manifold demands of science. The basic purpose of writing in science is the communication of descriptions and explanations of natural or contrived processes. Such writing should be clear, concise and accurate. However, a great deal of writing that students actually produce is anything but clear, concise and accurate. Much students' writing is marred by an unsuccessful attempt to imitate the language of teacher and textbook. All too often, this premature attempt to write in a mature scientific style prevents the students from achieving such clarity and accuracy as lie within their grasp.

Students do not have to get it right first time. There is definitely a place within secondary science for the redrafting which is a feature of the authentic writing process. Moreover, if we expect students to write within the constraints of a conventional format, such as the practical report, the summary or the prose answer, then we need to make our expectations explicit. We need to help our students to master those things which we think are important.

What is the Scientific Style?

The English language may be thought of as a collection of repertoires from which those who are adept choose according to the purpose and audience of their communication. The scientific style is one such repertoire. It represents a characteristic mix of features drawn from the standard dialect of English.

The scientific style arose in response to needs of the emerging scientific communities. It is significant that the deliberate cultivation of a scientific style is associated with the growth of the Royal Society. As the audience for scientific communication became more defined, so did the language which that audience expected. By 1667, Sprat (the Secretary of the Royal Society) was calling for a "close, natural, naked way of speaking", and we may suppose, of writing. This was is marked contrast to the flowery ornamentation of the literary style of his day. The style which emerged is indeed close, but it has long since ceased to be natural or naked!

The features of the standard dialect were chosen by the scientific community because they gave expression to the basic values of that community. The style developed in response to three demands of precision, clarity and brevity. Good scientific writing remains accurate, clear and as brief as the content will allow.

The style fulfils a number of communicative functions through more frequent use of a number of features from standard dialect. The frequency and mix of these features defines the scientific style of writing.

Scientific English is used to give instructions. It is used in describing and classifying objects or processes. It is used in defining processes or objects and in inferring from observations. The style is used when a scientist, or student, is hypothesising, comparing, contrasting or predicting. It is an integral part of symbolic or numerical examples and descriptions. Measurement, observation, reporting and experimentation all involve use of the style. The scientific style is one of the tools through which generalisations are meaningfully communicated. It is used to name objects and phenomena. These functions give the subject its coherence and they also lead to the mix of features which characterise its style.

Scientific English can be identified by characteristic features at the level of word, sentence, paragraph and passage.

Word-Level Features

The specialised vocabulary of science is its most obvious feature. Evans (1974) noted that secondary school science may involve as many new words as study of a foreign language at the same level. These new words may be modified from general use. For example, *stand* is used to mean *remain* or *do not disturb* in Chemistry.

Mix the marble chips with the acid, in the test tube.
Then let the mixture stand.

The new words may be constructed from classical roots. For example,

The mesoderm is a layer in the middle of the skin.

Scientific words can be classified as technical or non-technical. Technical words are likely to be actively taught by the science teacher. Under normal circumstances, non-technical words are much less likely to be actively taught. In the sentences above *stand* is an example of non-technical word while *mesoderm* is manifestly technical. Ironically, it is often the non-technical words which cause the most trouble for learners. Often teachers simply assume that they are a part of the language which the student brings to school. In many cases this is a mistaken assumption.

Sentence-Level Features

The definite article *the* is used in particular ways in the scientific style. It is used, in its usual role of indicating specificity, to discriminate between generalisations and groups and to distinguish ratio from fraction. Associated with this is a breakdown in the usual distinction between mass and unit nouns (countables). Many nouns which are non-countable in the standard dialect became countable in the scientific style. Countable nouns take an *s* when they are plural and the indefinite article when they are singular. Non-countables do not have a plural form. For example, *sand* is a powder. Powders are usually non-countable in English. However, geologists will often discuss the water-bearing properties of different sands.

Prepositions can hold the key to much meaning in a piece of scientific writing. Modifiers are particularly prevalent. *Which* phrases occur very often and adverb modifiers are frequently used. The clustering of multiple nouns and adjectives is a noticeable feature of mature scientific writing. These adjective strings are a very concise way of achieving the precision which is sought in scientific description.

Particular verb tenses are very common. The simple present is the most common, with the simple past and modal present being used as well. Universal statements often make use of the future tense.

Phrases, and indeed whole sentences, are often reduced in an attempt to achieve the brevity which is one of the aims of the style. These reduced phrases are then packed together to form long, dense, subordinated sentences.

The whole tone of scientific writing is factual and impersonal. The use of the passive is further complicated by the frequent use of statives. Stative constructions appear identical to passives but they describe arrangements rather than depersonalising activities (Trimble 1985 p115).

Paragraph-Level Features

Scientific prose makes use of a number of logical connectives which are less frequent outside that style. Connectives express the relation between ideas and if they are not understood the conceptual flow of scientific paragraphs is lost, along with most of the content acquisition.

If... then constructions are very common, as the writer tries to communicate possible consequences, and paragraphs are tied together by the repeated use of demonstratives (pointer words), such as *above, below, the following*. Personal pronouns are also used to replace names.

Science paragraphs are not always sequenced in the same way as writing from other styles. Standard paragraphs consist of a topic sentence, followed by support sentences and finishing with a concluding sentence. This might be called a deductive sequence. Writing in science often adopts an inductive sequence, with the topic sentence coming towards the end of the paragraph.

Passage-Level Features

Science includes a number of conventional formats. The practical report is probably the most obvious. However, there is also a set of conventions covering short answers and short essays in school science.

The style is not entirely arbitrary. However, neither is it self evident. Specialist styles are historical conventions. They are the product of the communities which use them. Access to those communities usually depends on mastery of the particular style. If we want our students to have access to the concepts and skills developed through science, the students will need receptive mastery of the style through which those intellectual products are communicated. Our students will not absorb this style without our help.

The way that the style hangs together is illustrated by Figure 1. In this figure, the first box in the "Features" column encloses features at the word level, the features below are at the sentence level, the next box encloses features at the paragraph level and the final features are at the passage level. The arrows on the figure show some of the connections which tie the style together. Scientists wanted to define and contrast with precision and so modifiers are a characteristic feature of scientific language. They want to infer and predict, briefly and so demonstratives (pointer words) are common. Scientists want to report with clarity and so they work within particular format conventions.

The style provides problems for a wide range of students. O'Toole (1982) provides a summary of a range of research on the subject. Here, let it suffice to say that data from a number of sources, dealing with a number of particular problems, in a number of different countries, shows that the scientific style causes difficulties for students across the whole range of socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds. Naturally enough, students who come from non-standard speaking backgrounds have greater difficulty, but almost all students have some degree of trouble.

Therefore there seems to be a need to adopt a language conscious approach to teaching science. The problem is that science teachers are not trained to think in terms of the linguistic demands of their subject. It may be helpful to connect some of what they expect with an understanding of language.

Science teachers are interested in helping students learn more about the natural world. This involves the development of a range of concepts, skills and processes, which are laid out in syllabus and program documents. The mastery of these concepts, skills and processes involves, or depends upon, a number of language expectations.

These expectations are so pervasive that they are often unconscious. Students are unable to perform as we expect, but the cause of the problem remains obscure. The style of language, to which our training has accustomed us, is well and truly beyond the experience of most of our students, and this is responsible for at least some of the difficulties which they face. We have been dealing with the style for so long, and with such success, that we have forgotten that others are not similarly adept.

Students are expected to deal with instructions which deal with the particular processes and concepts of science. The texts from which they are expected to learn are written in the particular style which characterises science. The questions asked and the explanations elicited are expected to be couched in the same style. And when students' writing is assessed it is often judged by how well it approximates to that style.

A language conscious approach is called for because science teachers have reasonable expectations about what their students should be able to do in science. If our students are not able to do the things we want them to, then we should help them to do them. Students are not going to absorb the scientific style by some process akin to intellectual osmosis. If we want our students to read their textbook, then we need to help them to do it. If we want our students to write adequate practical reports, then we need to teach them how to do that. If we want our students to prepare sensible answers to examination questions, then we need to guide them as they move towards the examinations. If we want our students to function within the scientific style, then we need to actively teach it.

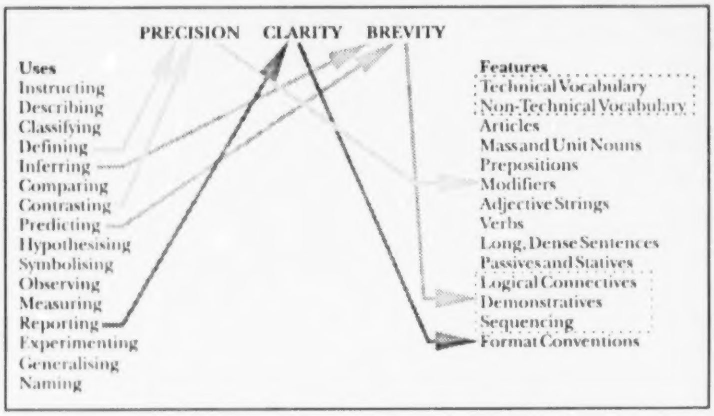

Figure 1 – The scientific style of English

An Integrated Response

Dealing actively with the scientific style need not be an extra thing for the specialist teacher to do. Language activities and exercises can be used to introduce concepts or skills, and they can be used to revise work once it has been completed. Some useful types of exercises can be found in O'Toole (1991). Exercises based on these frames can be linked into conceptually coherent sequences. Once such conceptually coherent series of exercises are prepared they can be used in a number of ways. Exercises based on the word and sentence level features of the scientific style can be used as language conscious revision, following the normal introduction of the skills and concepts. Dalton and O'Toole (1984) provides a wide range of exercises which were designed for this use. Similar exercises can be used as the basis for supplementary language exercises. Such use has been found to lead to a measurable improvement in language competence with an associated improvement in acquisition of science concepts (O'Toole 1985). Exercises based on paragraph and passage level features can be used to actively teach the rhetorical and format conventions of the style. Useful examples of such exercises can be found in Cleland and Evans (1984) and Morris and Stewart-Dore (1984). Spoken activities can be used to introduce a section of a topic. Language development tasks can be included in standard science activities (Freer and O'Toole 1990).

Landing!

We have come a long way from *Romancing the Stone*! Science can be both a bridge to more competent language use, and a barrier to achievement. The potential implicit in the activity base of school science outweighs the problems produced by the specialist style in which it is often presented. The style can be directly taught, so that it becomes but the first in a number of specialist styles which will be mastered by the growing child. For science is only one of the specialist styles to which our students are exposed.

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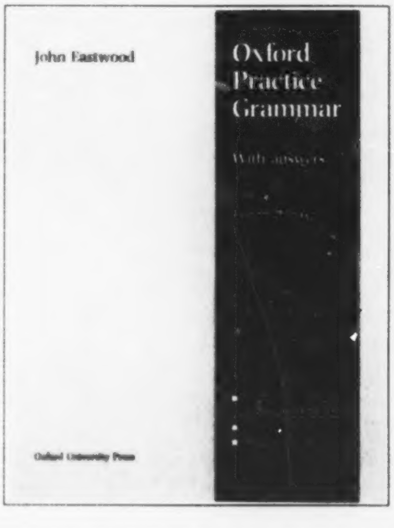

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ESL Informed Planning in the Mainstream – Using *The ESL Framework of Stages*

Penny McKay discusses how the **ESL Framework of Stages** *can be used to provide an overview of common targets of learning across subject areas K – 12.*

Introduction

The ESL Framework of Stages: An Approach to ESL Learning in Schools K – 12 (McKay & Scarino, 1991) is a reference for ESL and mainstream teachers teaching ESL learners in direct ESL classes (as for example, in an Intensive Language Centre), in cooperative ESL (for example, parallel classes or team teaching) and in ESL-informed mainstream teaching (where the mainstream teacher incorporates ESL strategies into her teaching).

The target of ESL is to assist ESL learners through language-focused and language-integrated teaching to move towards successful mainstream participation and learning. ESL in the *ESL Framework of Stages* is viewed broadly, through the **five goals** of the Australian Language Levels (ALL) curriculum framework (Scarino *et al.*, 1988), that is through communication, sociocultural, learning-how-to-learn, language and cultural awareness and knowledge goals. While the ESL curriculum can be called *language focused* (as opposed to mainstream content focused) it needs to be understood that this term refers to a broadly-based approach to ESL, with language *foregrounded* within mainstream curriculum. It is through the five goals that the mainstream curriculum and the language-focused curriculum as set out in the *ESL Framework of Stages* can be integrated into a comprehensive curriculum approach to ESL learner needs.

The ESL Framework of Stages

Diagram 1 presents the *ESL Framework of Stages* map used to group ESL learners into interlocking Stages. Two dimensions of growth are encompassed:

- the growth in ability to use English, from beginning skills in English, towards more conceptually demanding uses of English as learners transfer their knowledge, skills and understandings from their first language experiences;
- the growth in knowledge, skills and understandings in mainstream learning as learners move through from K to 12. This dimension also includes a growth in ability to use English in more conceptually demanding ways. The expectations of the mainstream curriculum are tied to this dimension of growth.

For each box or Stage, pages of language-focused objectives and activities suitable for learners at the Stage

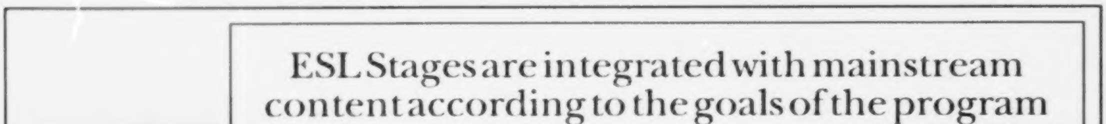

ESL Stages are integrated with mainstream content according to the goals of the program
KEY STAGES
Upper secondary
1L BEGINNERS & LITERACY
1 BEGINNERS
2
3
4
Middle secondary
1L BEGINNERS & LITERACY
1 BEGINNERS
2
3
Junior secondary\ late upper primary
1L BEGINNERS & LITERACY
1 BEGINNERS
B
2
Upper/middle primary
BL BEGINNERS & LITERACY
B 1* 2 BEGINNERS
B
Junior primary
AL BEGINNERS & LITERACY
A 1* 2 BEGINNERS
A
*Growth Points
MAINSTREAM CONTENT

Diagram 1 – The ESL Framework of Stages

Pro forma for planning a long-term program

(includes initial grading and sequencing of content

	SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2	SEMESTER 3	SEMESTER 4
Essential Learning	General Objectives	General Objectives	General Objectives	General Objectives
Modules which include units of work				
Across-semester modules (e.g. Language and cultural awareness module)				
Specific content	Learning-how-to-learn skills			
	Language development, sociocultural aspects, general knowledge: These elements will arise in activities. It is also useful to plan many of them in advance to ensure that (a) they are in fact covered, (b) learners' language and learning resource is expanded, and (c) language development can be monitored.			

Diagram 2 – *Pro forma for planning a long-term program (Vale, D et al 1990)*

are provided in Stage Descriptions. These become reference points, together with the mainstream curriculum, for ESL-informed planning in the mainstream.

A key assumption in the *ESL Framework of Stages* is that the teacher has a vital role to play in interpretation and refinement according to the needs and interests of individual learners. It is essential that there is refinement and adaptation in the use of *ESL Framework of Stages* in order that individual needs and interests are catered for in ESL teaching.

Planning for ESL Learning

Detailed planning guidelines are provided in the *ALL Guidelines* and in *Pocket ALL* (Vale *et al.*, 1990).

Planning can be done at a syllabus or shared program level, or it can be done at an individual teacher program level. Teachers are referred to *Pocket ALL* and to examples of modules in the *Developing Syllabuses and Programs: A Series of Exemplars, Italian K – 12* (Scarino *et al.*, 1990) for guidance on syllabus level planning.

For planning at the individual teacher program level a range of further possible levels of ESL-informed programming are possible.

For long-term planning teachers can refer to Diagram 2 and consider language-focused goals and objectives in conjunction with mainstream goals and objectives, and activities across a longer term such as a semester or a year.

For short-term planning teachers can refer to the focus wheel format in Diagram 3 and consider various details of planning to be considered, ie language development, skills and strategies, sociocultural aspects, which relate to and can enhance the planned mainstream activities.

In planning teachers can:

- plan for language learning that arises out of the mainstream content;
- refer to the *ESL Framework of Stages* to ensure that the necessary range of language-focused objectives are covered in the teaching program. It might be that some refocusing of the mainstream program is needed in order to keep the ESL learners on track in their language development.

Cooperative Planning — ESL Specialist and Mainstream Teacher Planning Together

The key to effective ESL-informed planning is cooperative planning between the ESL specialist and the mainstream teacher.

Cooperative planning can be highly effective when the ESL specialist brings to the planning session a specialist knowledge of the language-focused needs of the ESL learner(s) and the mainstream teacher brings a knowledge of the subject-specific (content and skills)

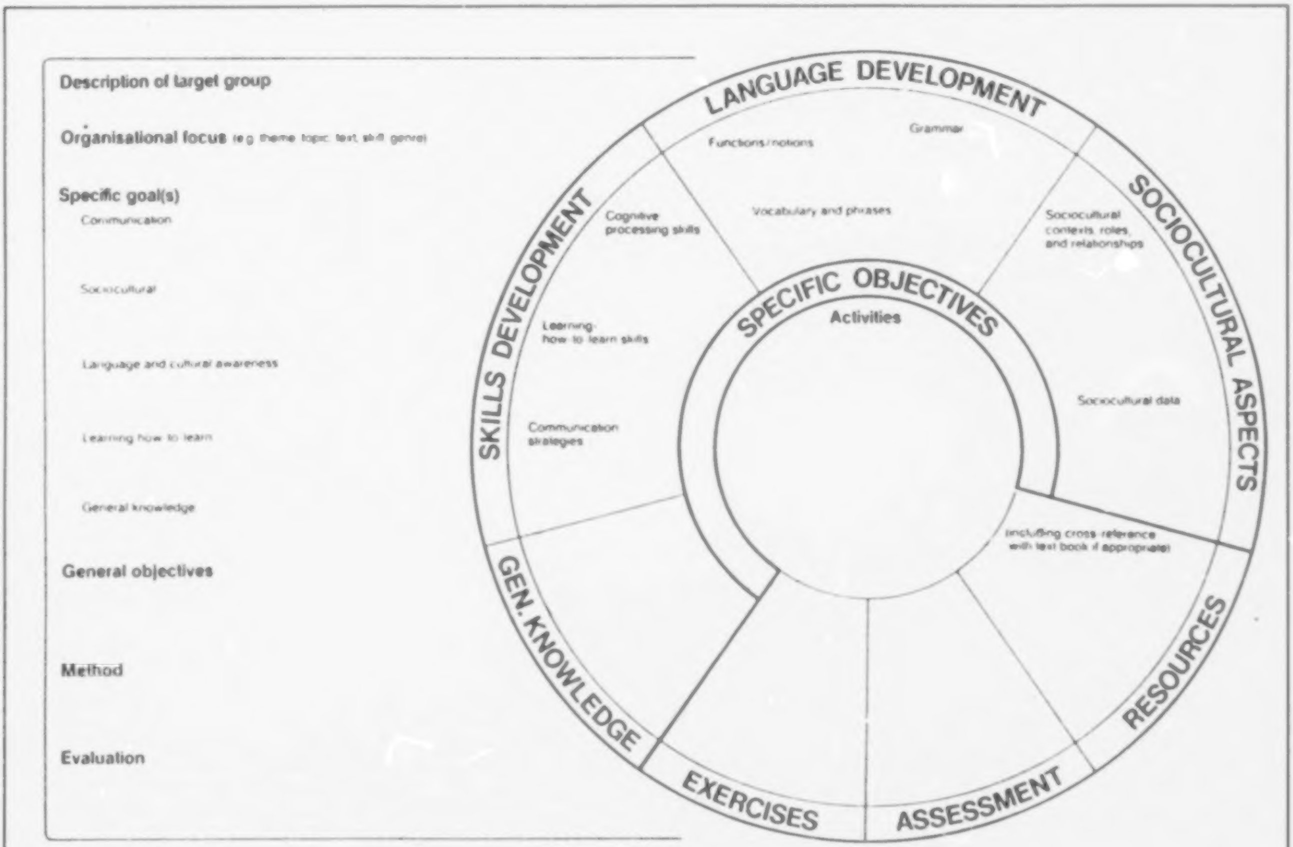
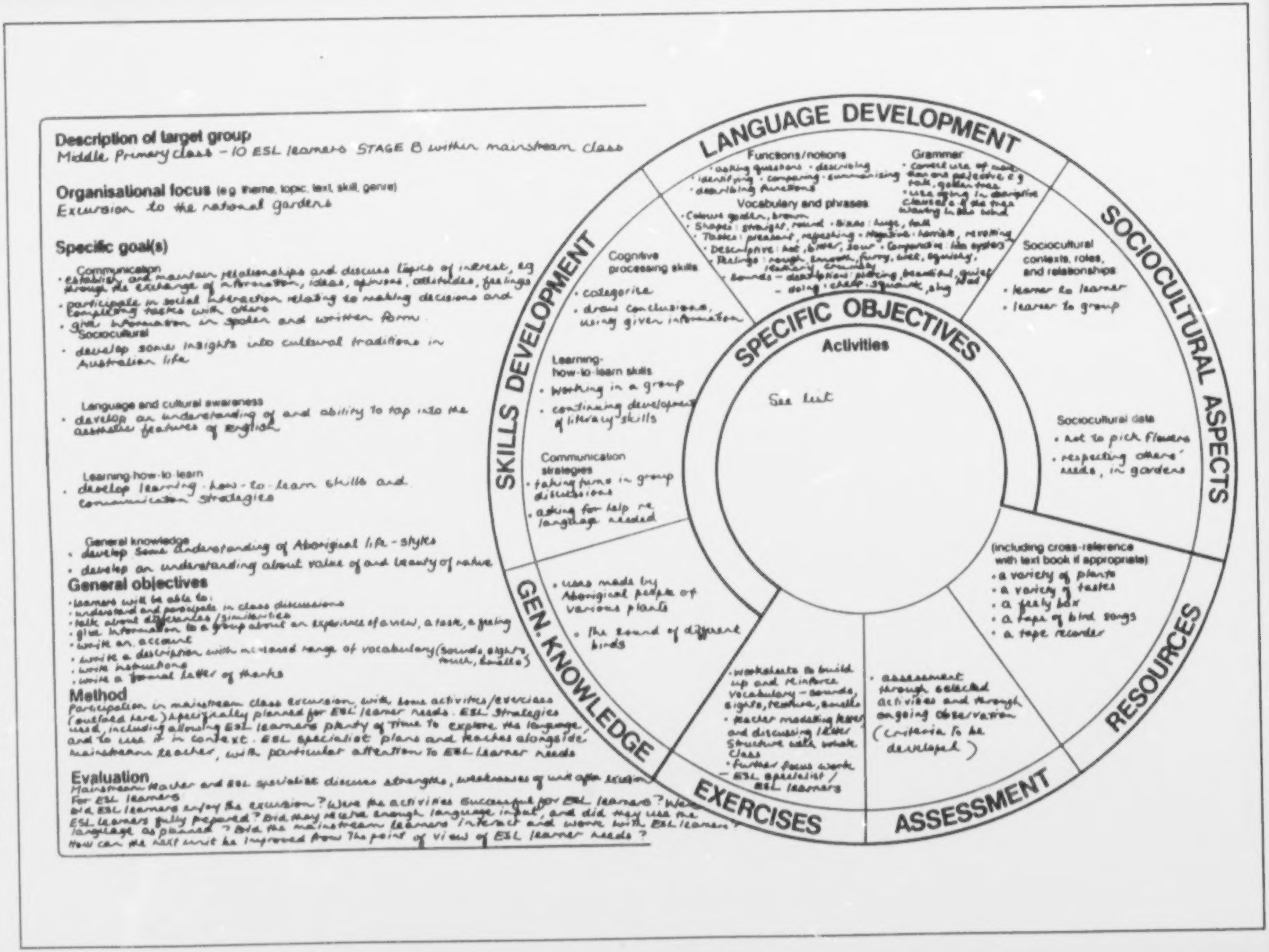

Description of target group
Organisational focus (e.g. theme, topic, text, skill, genre)
Specific goal(s)
Communication
Sociocultural
Language and cultural awareness
Learning how to learn
General knowledge
General objectives
Method
Evaluation
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
Functions/notions
Grammar
Vocabulary and phrases
SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECTS
Sociocultural contexts, roles, and relationships
Sociocultural data
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
Cognitive processing skills
Learning-how-to-learn skills
Communication strategies
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Activities
(including cross-reference with text book if appropriate)
GEN. KNOWLEDGE
EXERCISES
ASSESSMENT
RESOURCES

Diagram 3 – Focus wheel for a unit of work (Scarino, A et al 1988)



Description of target group
Middle Primary class – 10 ESL learners STAGE B within mainstream class

Organisational focus (eg theme, topic, text, skill, genre)
Excursion to the national gardens

Specific goal(s)

Communication
- establish and maintain relationships and discuss topics of interest, eg through the exchange of information, ideas, opinions, attitudes, feelings
- participate in social interaction relating to making decisions and completing tasks with others
- give information in spoken and written form.

Sociocultural
- develop some insights into cultural traditions in Australian life

Language and cultural awareness
- develop an understanding of and ability to tap into the aesthetic features of English

Learning-how-to-learn
- develop learning-how-to-learn skills and communication strategies

General knowledge
- develop some understanding of Aboriginal life-styles
- develop an understanding about value of and beauty of nature

General objectives
- learners will be able to:
- understand and participate in class discussions
- talk about differences/similarities
- give information to a group about an experience of a view, a taste, a feeling
- write an account
- write a description with increased range of vocabulary (sounds, sights, touch, smells)
- write instructions
- write a formal letter of thanks

Method
Participation in mainstream class excursion, with some activities/exercises (outlined here) specifically planned for ESL learner needs. ESL strategies used, including allowing ESL learners plenty of time to explore the language, and to use it in context. ESL specialist plans and teaches alongside mainstream teacher, with particular attention to ESL learner needs

Evaluation
Mainstream teacher and ESL specialist discuss strengths, weaknesses of unit after excursion
For ESL learners
Did ESL learners enjoy the excursion? Were the activities successful for ESL learners? Were ESL learners fully prepared? Did they receive enough language input, and did they use the language as planned? Did the mainstream learners interact and work with ESL learners? How can the next unit be improved from the point of view of ESL learner needs?

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Functions/notions
- asking questions
- describing
- identifying
- comparing
- summarising
- describing functions

Vocabulary and phrases
- Colours: golden, brown
- Shapes: straight, round
- Sizes: huge, tall
- Tastes: pleasant, refreshing
- Negative: horrible, revolting
- Descriptive: hot, bitter, sour
- Comparative: like oysters
- Feelings: rough, smooth, furry, wet, squishy, feathery, crumbly
- Sounds – descriptive: piercing, beautiful, quiet, loud
  – doing: cheep, squawk, sing

Grammar
- correct use of noun, then and adjective e.g. tall, golden tree
- use of -ing in descriptive clauses e.g. the trees blowing in the wind

SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECTS

Sociocultural contexts, roles, and relationships
- learner to learner
- learner to group

Sociocultural data
- not to pick flowers
- respecting others' needs, in gardens

RESOURCES

(including cross-reference with text book if appropriate)
- a variety of plants
- a variety of tastes
- a feely box
- a tape of bird songs
- a tape recorder

ASSESSMENT
- assessment through selected activities and through ongoing observation (criteria to be developed)

EXERCISES
- worksheets to build up and reinforce vocabulary – sounds, sights, touches, smells
- teacher modelling letter and discussing letter structure with whole class
- further focus work – ESL specialist / ESL learners

GEN. KNOWLEDGE
- uses made by Aboriginal people of various plants
- the sound of different birds

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Cognitive processing skills
- categorise
- draw conclusions, using given information

Learning-how-to-learn skills
- working in a group
- continuing development of literacy skills

Communication strategies
- taking turns in group discussions
- asking for help re language needed

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Activities

See list

Diagram 4 – Example of unit of work using the focus wheel (McKay, P and Scarino, A 1991) needs of the learner(s). Together the ESL specialist and the mainstream teacher can focus on language needs related to the mainstream curriculum, taking into account the different Stages of development of the ESL learners.

If an ESL specialist is not available, it is hoped that the mainstream teacher takes on the ESL specialist's role in programming, at least as far as she can. ESL-in-the-mainstream courses are available in most States to enhance mainstream teachers' skills in this area.

An example of a unit of work planned by an ESL specialist with a mainstream teacher for ESL students learning in a primary mainstream context is provided in Diagram 4.

Activities

In class

- Learners categorise a number of plants useful to Aboriginal people (by colour, shape, size, etc.). (AT2)
- Learners, blindfolded, taste a variety of foods, and describe the taste. (AT1)
- Learners feel objects in a 'feely box' and describe how they feel. (AT2)
- Learners listen to recorded bird sounds, grouping the words they know (and new ones) into description words and doing words. (AT2)
- Learners discuss ways to write instructions for preparing a particular plant for a particular purpose.
  - What parts would they use? – Seeds, leaves, berries, bark, etc.
  - Why would they use them? – Food, water, to make children sleep, carving, making drums, food-carrying utensils.
  - How would they use them? – Crush, suck, squeeze, chew, lick, cook, beat, split, soak them, eat them raw or toasted, pound them, for medicinal purposes and sedative purposes, for bites.

On the excursion

- Learners, in pairs, lead their blindfolded partner to a tree. The blindfolded learner feels the tree and describes it. (A tape recorder can be used for a later teaching and also for assessment purposes.) The pair return to a central area. The blindfold is removed, and the learner tries to find the same tree. (AT1,2)
- Learners in small groups discuss then write down notes on their observations about their own sections of the gardens. They are guided in their observations by a stimulus card from the teacher. (AT4)
- Learners write, in the same small groups, a group report of the sights, sounds, textures and smells they experience in the gardens. (AT4)
- Learners, in the same small groups, record a scene or view from a certain point of the gardens on a tape recorder. (AT4)
- Learners complete a map of the gardens using information from learner groups. (AT4)
- Learners take photographs of the gardens to make a panorama of the area, and write descriptions for each display. (AT4)
- Learners write a letter to the ranger, thanking him/her, and describing the most memorable part of the excursion for them. (AT2,5)

(Adapted from a unit of work developed by Jeanette Widmer, ACT.)

Integration

A key message for ESL-informed planning is one of integration. In particular teachers need to integrate:

- language and content;
- learner background knowledge and experiences into new learning;
- the elements of learning (grammar, vocabulary, skills, cultural aspects, etc.) within activities;
- activities within units of work;
- units of work within a comprehensive year's program;
- learners' long-term language needs into planning for mainstream learning over time.

Monitoring of Progress

Monitoring of progress is an important part of planning. In the *ESL Framework of Stages* assessment activities (Stage Determiners) are provided to assist teachers to place learners so that appropriate Stages in the *ESL Framework of Stages* are referred to in planning. Stage Determiner procedures are also used to monitor language growth (or lack of growth) of learners in mainstream classes over time, that is over one year and also across years of schooling, ideally from entry to Year 12. Information about ESL learner progress will of course, assist further planning. The necessary action can be taken when learners appear to fall behind. (See case studies in the *ESL Framework of Stages* for commonly observed ESL learner pathways through school.)

Conclusion

The *ESL Framework of Stages*, developed out of a consensus of practising teachers' experience, is a map designed to provide an overview of common targets of learning across subject areas, and across K – 12. It is not able to provide all of the details needed for effective planning for ESL learner growth; teachers need to draw on their own particular expertise and experience, together with ESL specialist expertise and experience, to refine and adapt the information given in the *ESL Framework of Stages* according to the specific language and content needs of the individual ESL learners in their classes.

References

McKay, P and Scarino, A 1991 *ESL Framework of Stages: An Approach to ESL Learning in Schools K–12* Curriculum Corporation Melbourne

Scarino, A *et al* 1988 *The Australian Language Levels Guidelines* Curriculum Development Centre Canberra

Vale, D *et al* 1990 *Pocket ALL* Curriculum Corporation Melbourne

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Cooperative Learning as an Approach to Second Language Learning

Mary Mifsud and Elina Raso explore the place of cooperative learning in the second language learning classroom. The ideas are based on issues raised at an inservice they attended.

At a recent inservice *Cooperative Learning as an Approach to Second Language Learning* we focused on a range of issues including:

- the place of interactive group work in language development;
- the integration of cooperative learning tasks into a total approach that supports students in their language development;
- ways of actively supporting ESL students to assume roles needed in some cooperative learning tasks.

The Place of Interactive Group Work in Language Development

Cooperative group work involves students learning in collaborative settings, such as pairs or small groups. This is not simply a matter of asking students to sit together in order to contribute their own piece of work to one longer group project. Interdependence needs to be planned for – that is, individuals need to be aware of their own roles within the group and they need to be clear about the group goal.

How Does Cooperative Group Work Benefit ESL Students?

Long and Porter (1985) in their classroom based research on group work and ESL learners set out the following outcomes of group work for ESL learners.

1. Group work improves the quantity and quality of student talk.
2. Group work promotes planning for individual differences.
3. Group work promotes a positive effective climate.
4. Group work increases motivation.

Supporting ESL Students in Cooperative Learning

Collaborative pair and group work creates an interactive learning environment for second language learners. Interaction in the classroom occurs at different levels.

A broader view of interaction in the language classroom includes interaction between:

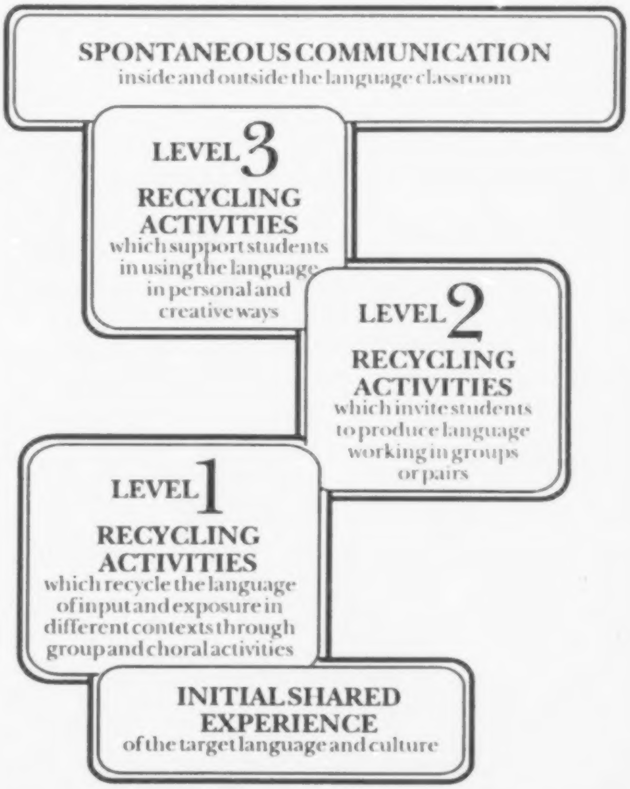
- the teacher and the whole class;
- the teacher and smaller groups;
- the teacher and individual students;
- student/s and student/s;
- students and materials (including visuals, diagrams and texts);
- students and content.

In each of these encounters the key feature is that students need to be actively involved. Students motivated and cognitively challenged by a task are actively participating in learning. Students writing, reading, listening and thinking are engaged in learning by interacting with the content of the task.

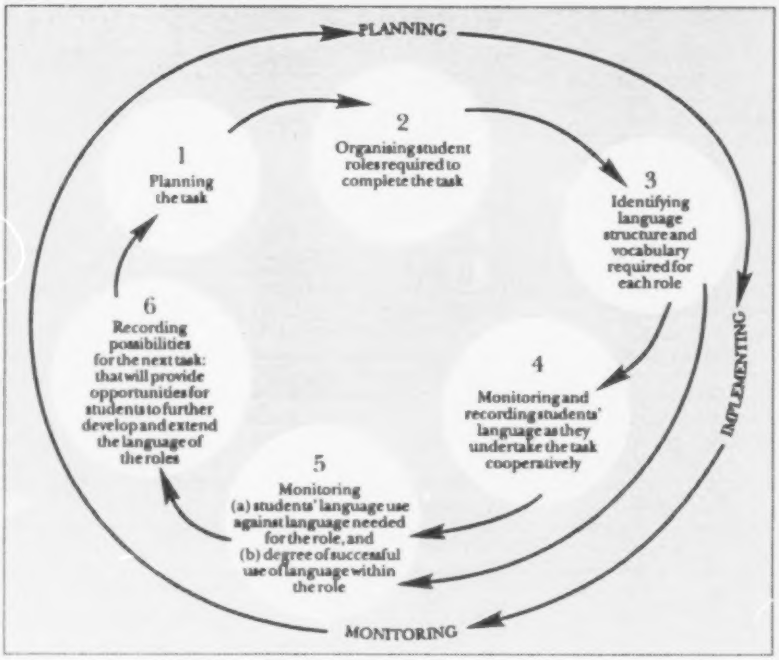
When we define an interactive classroom in these broader terms, collaborative pair and group work becomes only one form of interaction – but one that is integral to a teaching-learning approach that supports students in their language and learning development. The Approach to Planning for Language Acquisition set out in *About Teaching Languages (Unit 3: Planning for Language Learning)* demonstrates how cooperative learning tasks are incorporated into a sequence of activities designed to develop students' language.

In the last issue of *TESOL in Context*, the approach from *About Teaching Languages* was summarised and explored by Alison Standish in the article *Recycling Language: A Suggested Teaching Approach for ESL Students in Primary Mainstream Classes*. The article demonstrated how this approach allows for a sequence of activities to be planned to meet the language needs of particular groups of students.

Let us now consider the place of cooperative group work in this approach. In such an approach, the main aim is not the planning of cooperative learning activities but the incorporation of cooperative learning tasks into a sequence of activities that support


SPONTANEOUS COMMUNICATION
inside and outside the language classroom
LEVEL 3
RECYCLING ACTIVITIES
which support students in using the language in personal and creative ways
LEVEL 2
RECYCLING ACTIVITIES
which invite students to produce language working in groups or pairs
LEVEL 1
RECYCLING ACTIVITIES
which recycle the language of input and exposure in different contexts through group and choral activities
INITIAL SHARED EXPERIENCE
of the target language and culture

students in their linguistic, cognitive and social development.


PLANNING
1
Planning the task
2
Organising student roles required to complete the task
3
Identifying language structure and vocabulary required for each role
4
Monitoring and recording students' language as they undertake the task cooperatively
5
Monitoring
(a) students' language use against language needed for the role, and
(b) degree of successful use of language within the role
6
Recording possibilities for the next task: that will provide opportunities for students to further develop and extend the language of the roles
IMPLEMENTING
MONITORING

The approach directs teachers to organise a sequence of activities based on a clear linguistic goal. The core language of the sequence is then recycled through a range of tasks involving students in different interactions.

Let us consider how the focus of the interactions changes as we move through the sequence. The initial shared experience and level one activities mainly involve groups of students in tasks which broaden their present experience of the language. These activities make the core language of the sequence explicit for students through exposure and modelling.

The focus is on interactions with the teacher, materials and content and on guided interactions with peers. Time spent focusing on the language of the activities is time well spent. In this way students are better prepared to participate successfully in the more challenging cooperative tasks at level two. At this stage, students are required to use the core language modelled and explored in the initial level on activities to complete pair or group tasks. The focus here is on interactions with peers, materials and the content. The teacher's role is still important, but is mainly one of intervening where necessary rather than actively leading. Monitoring of students' participation is crucial at this stage as it indicates where students need additional experience and more explicit demonstrations.

Once students have had a range of experience at this level, they are in a better position to use the language in a personal and creative way in different contexts. The individual and cognitively demanding tasks at level three require students to call on their total linguistic repertoire in order to complete a range of tasks successfully. We have seen that cooperative group work is important in second language development but it cannot be an isolated activity. It must be planned into an approach for language acquisition. Without preparing students to participate actively in the challenging cooperative learning tasks, we lose some of the language learning potential, and students have fewer opportunities to succeed.

An essential area of cooperative learning in second language classrooms is the student roles. The next part of this article looks at the importance of preparing students to take on the roles required in some cooperative learning tasks successfully and confidently.

Supporting ESL Students to Take on Roles in Cooperative Learning Tasks

The success of a cooperative learning task relies heavily on all students in the group assuming responsibility for their role. Parallel with this is the teacher's responsibility to facilitate, support and monitor each student's performance linguistically, socially and cognitively. To explore this further, two issues need to be addressed. The first issue considers how to monitor, record and analyse the language produced by students, as they undertake a specific role in collaborative group work. The second issue is to identify where students require more support in using structures and vocabulary integral to fulfilling role requirements.

In considering the first issue, the diagram above outlines the steps involved in monitoring, recording and analysing language in cooperative learning activities.

Step 1. Organising Roles Required for the Task

Within cooperative learning there are a range of roles that students can undertake. The following are some examples suggested by teachers at the inservice:

- Encourager – offers affirmation
  – encourages each member to contribute
- Noise Level Monitor – indicates when noise level is too high
- Summariser – paraphrases what has been discussed
- Facilitator – similar role to organiser
  – makes comments: shares ideas, opinions so that members are set on the right track
- Gopher – 'goes' for things needed by the group
- Timekeeper – keeps group aware of time, without being disruptive
- Illustrator – draws, sketches, etc. ideas recorded
- Organiser – reads the task to members
  – keeps people on the task
- Reporter – reads/explains points concluded by her/his group, on conclusion of the task, to the rest of the groups
- Clarifier – explains ideas
  – asks various members to explain statements
  – paraphrases
- Recorder – writes down the ideas of the group, in a

Date:		
Language used by members to fulfil their roles		
Roles: **Language Structures** **Organiser:** Name:	**Socio-Linguistic Competencies** Registers, tone, non-verbal communication	**Strategic Competencies** Strategies used to continue the dialogue
Clarifier: Name:		
Recorder: Name:		
Reporter: Name:		
Kathy Johnston – Mary Mifsud – Elina Raso C.E.O. Melbourne 1991		

clear and legible form, so that the reporter can read the ideas, when reporting

The linguistic and cognitive skills needed vary from role to role. Therefore some of the less demanding roles can be combined so that all students are cognitively challenged in the task.

Step 2. Identifying Language Structures and Vocabulary Required for Each Role

When we consider identifying the language of the roles, we see that the organiser is required to:

- Read the task to members.
- Keep members on track.

Some possible language structures related to the role of the organiser include:

- *Do we all understand what we have to do?*
- *Why do we think...?*
- *Do we all agree with that...?*
- *Write that down...* (to recorder)
- *Come on, we're running out of time.*
- *We're off the track, now...*

In compiling lists of anticipated language for each role, it is obvious that some roles will require more complex language than others. The role of timekeeper on its own may not require the student in that role to make a single utterance! He/she may only need to watch the clock and indicate to his/her peers when time is up – simply by pointing to the clock. This role may be suitable for a newly arrived student who has very little English. However, it would not be too challenging for the student to continue in this role six months down the track.

ESL students need time to develop, practise and refine the social and linguistic skills needed in each role. If the language required is not made explicit to students, they will not be aware of what makes one role different from any other role. ESL students need to have ongoing opportunities to recycle the language of the same role.

Keeping records of roles undertaken by each student during various cooperative learning activities enables the teacher to make sure that all students will eventually have the opportunity to undertake a range of roles.

Step 3. Monitoring and Recording Students' Language

Once the language of each role has been predicted and students are working in groups to complete a cooperative learning task, teachers need to monitor and record the language produced by students.

Organisational strategies need to be in place so that monitoring is made manageable. The teacher cannot be listening to four or five different groups at once, one group of students needs to be targetted for monitoring. The matrix above is designed to help teachers to record language produced by each student in the chosen group as they fulfil their role requirements.

Participants at the CEO inservice completed the matrix on the following page as they participated in an actual cooperative learning task.

Step 4. Monitoring Students' Language Use Against Language Needed for the Role

When the language has been recorded and the cooperative learning task completed, a comparison between the predicted language and the actual language produced needs to occur. In some instances, students may not be using the range of language anticipated for each role. This may be due to the fact that students have had limited experience with this language. In this case, teachers need to look at a range of situations in which this language would be modelled so that it becomes part of the students' language repertoire.

ESL students will need to have planned opportunities to hear specific language modelled by the teacher, as well as be able to practise the various structures

		Date: 6th August 1991
Language used by members to fulfil their roles		
Roles: **Language Structures**	**Socio-Linguistic Competencies** Registers, tone, non-verbal communication	**Strategic Competencies** Strategies used to continue the dialogue
Organiser: Name: Louisa *We have to...* *We only have 4 minutes...* *We've run out of paper...*	*looks at watch* *hand/head movements* *eye to eye contact*	*...um...* *...um...*
Clarifier: Name: Peter *Is that what you're saying?* *What was that...?* *Surely that means...?* *Can you elaborate on that...?* *Are you saying...?* *Read that question again...*	*nods* *points* *nudges* *pat on back*	*...maybe...*
Recorder: Name: Laura *Do you want me to write...?* *What was that comment...?* *Could you repeat...* *... Say that slowly.* *... Should we say...?* *... How do you spell that?* *... Could you check this...* *... How could I write that?*	*...taps on paper* *hand movements/looks at speaker*	*...taps on paper*
Reporter: Name: Maria *I have to explain this...* *That doesn't matter.* *Is this idea right?* *You don't have to write that...* *We'd better decide...*	*raises voice* *leans forward* *points to each word* *nods...*	
Kathy Johnston – Mary Mifsud – Elina Raso C.E.O. Melbourne 1991		

associated with the roles. The following are some suggestions:

- Modelling questions for students, so that information is clarified during morning talk or news time.
- Making students aware of the reporting skills needed to report information successfully during this time.
- Planning for story reading, where students are guided in summarising the story in their own words.
- Organising activities where the language of instruction is modelled and recycled before students are required to produce the language during pair or group work.
- Arranging clinic groups where students with similar needs work with the teacher to build experiences in order to recycle the language of specific roles through games and role plays.
- Compiling lists of structures needed by each role and displaying these around the room.

If you were an organiser, here are some instructions you might use

"Let's read the task first..."
"We will need to have..."
"We will need to negotiate this..."
"Do we all agree with this...?"
"Do we all understand this...?"
...

Conclusion

Cooperative learning should not be viewed as a subject on its own, but rather as an approach through which a topic or content area is developed. The approach is particularly appropriate to ESL students when it provides maximum opportunities for the modelling of the language structures and vocabulary.

It can also provide peer support as students work together to explore open-ended tasks that challenge and extend their knowledge, understandings and experiences, in a way that may not occur in whole classroom teaching.

References

Greco, S and Raso, E 1989 *About Teaching Languages: Unit 3 Planning for Language Learning* Catholic Education Office Melbourne

Long, M H and Porter, P A 1985 Group Work, Inter Language Talk and Second Language Acquisition *TESOL Quarterly* Vol 19 No 2

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Introduction to Problem-Solving with NESB Students

This unit of work was developed collaboratively by an ESL and a Maths teacher at Brunswick English Language Centre.

This unit has two basic functions: to give students the opportunity to learn and practise a range of skills and strategies for problem-solving, and to acquire, practise and develop their cooperative learning skills.

For this unit, we use a set of cards with clearly written, unambiguous problems drawn from sources such as *Children Think* (Milton, 1983).

For each problem, there is a corresponding solution card, showing the most typical way of arriving at the solution, as well as others, written in clear English, but with correct use of maths terms and symbols.

Past students have devised (or remembered) problems, and in groups have worked on the English language to express the problem unambiguously and explain the solution – their cards are also in the box.

The problems are challenging without being daunting, and do not require knowledge beyond that expected of a Year 8–9 student. Most can be solved in under half an hour, and some more quickly.

There are several different types of problems, each providing a vehicle for students to learn/devise/practise one (or more) of the essential problem-solving strategies and skills.

Problems which involve counting the number of components in a complex figure, for example, highlight the need for a systematic approach and careful recording.

'Fox and Geese' type problems allow students to develop diagrammatic methods of recording data.

Other types of problems include ones which need basic algebra to solve them, ones based on simple examples of exponential or cumulative growth and ones where letters stand for numbers.

Working through a range of these problems helps students to recognise and use problem-solving strategies such as working systematically, trial and error, looking for patterns, recording and diagram drawing.

The ideal cooperative approach to problem-solving involves the following steps. First, the students in the pair/group read the problem together, discuss it and make sure everyone fully understands the problem, and together formulate a plan of attack.

At each stage in the working through, or the solution of the problem, students should discuss and evaluate/modify their plan.

Students in the group, or a scribe should record the main features of their strategy, results of trials, even unsuccessful ones, appropriate tables/diagrams, their results, and evidence of checking.

When students are sure of the solution, they must clearly explain the problem, the process and the solution to the teacher, before they are allowed to attempt a new problem.

In their first session, students work in pairs, either chosen by the students themselves, or suggested by the teacher.

By the end of this session, many students are discussing and sharing ideas automatically.

Pairs which include students unfamiliar with group/pair work, or resistant to the approach, require teacher monitoring and encouragement, and often need the teacher to ask prompt questions of both students.

Most pairs will need teacher modelling of ways to record ideas and data, and will need assurance that the process of problem solving is at least as important as the solution, and that their ideas, modifications and mistakes, and the recording of these, are integral parts of the process.

In the second session, students can work in larger groups, threes or fours, if they choose. Each group should nominate a scribe at the beginning of the session; if this is not a person with a good command of English, the teacher could intervene.

At this stage, while the students are learning to be ordered in their problem-solving, a scribe who can keep up with the discussion and record appropriate information fairly well is essential.

Groups should be allowed to explore the new approach freely, but teacher guidance and modelling of ways to discuss the problem fruitfully and possible strategies for its solution is vital now, as is teacher modelling of recording.

A total of three to four hours classtime should give students exposure to a variety of problems which require a range of problem-solving strategies and techniques.

This should also give students time to become more comfortable with discussion and idea-sharing, and allow them some practice in appropriate note-taking and diagram drawing.

This unit should be followed up with a lengthier problem or investigation, which would give students the opportunity to practise and develop their skills over a more sustained and complex activity.

Ideally, the content of the activity should be relatively simple and easy to master, so that students are able to focus fully on the problem-solving nature of the task.

The following is an example of a lengthier problem that students can work on.

A Detailed Example of a Problem and its Solution

Problem

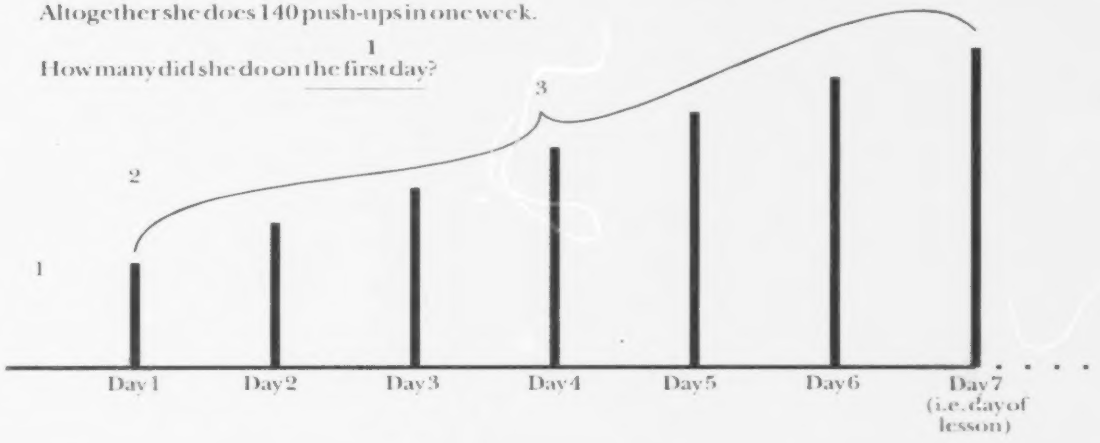
1 2 3

Anna wants to get fit, so she started to do push-ups. Each day she does three more than the day before.

Altogether she does 140 push-ups in one week.

1

How many did she do on the first day?



Teacher Activity	Student Activity	Linguistic Objectives
The teacher presents the problem.	Students, in groups, discuss the problem.	• Students need to know specialist vocabulary like *push-ups* and *to get fit*. • Students need to understand the time relationships indicated by the verbs. This can best be done by working out a time line together.
	As there is visual stimulus, students will relate the constant increase in number of push-ups per day to a simple algebraic formula.	To make statements about the diagram, students need to use words to show that the number of push-ups is increasing each day, such as, *on Day 2, she did three more than on Day 1* and to write parallel statements using mathematical notation, *Day 2 = Day 1 + 3.*
	By working through this problem together on the board, the students will come up with a pattern that looks like the sequence in column 3.	*On Day 7, she did three more than on Day 6; six more than on Day 5; nine more than on Day 4, etc.* *Day 7 = Day 6 + 3* *Day 7 = Day 5 + 6* *Day 7 = Day 4 + 9* *Day 7 = Day 3 + 12* *Day 7 = Day 2 + 15* *Day 7 = Day 1 + 18*
The teacher refers the students back to the original problem.	Students are focusing on the original problem. They see that they can use this sequence, but need to modify it in terms of Day 1. The rewritten sequence will look like the second sequence in column 3.	*Day 1 = Day 1* *Day 2 = Day 1 + 3* *Day 3 + Day 1 + 6* *Day 4 = Day 1 + 9* *Day 5 = Day 1 + 12* *Day 6 = Day 1 + 15* *Day 7 = Day 1 + 18* *Days 1–7 = 7 x Day 1 + 63*
	From the second sequence, they can see that all of the seven days added together will give the total for the week. So they know that 7 times Day 1 plus 63 equals 140. From this point they can solve the equation.	It is assumed that students are familiar with the language of the basic operations, and will be able to give: *subtract...from...* *divide...by...* *equals* (*both sides* may need to be deduced if students are not familiar with it).

Teacher Activity	Student Activity	Linguistic Objectives
	The group works out an algebraic expression.	*Let x = Day 1* $7x + 63 = 140$ *(seven 'x' plus sixty three equals one hundred and forty)* $7x + 63 - 63 = 140 - 63$ *(subtract sixty three from both sides, so seven 'x' equals seventy seven)* $\frac{7x}{7} = \frac{77}{7}$ *(divide both sides by seven)* $x = 11$ *('x' equals eleven, so Anna did eleven push-ups on the first day).*
The teacher asks a series of guide questions, the answers to which are written on the board: (a) *What did we want to find out?* (b) *What did we know?* (c) *What did we do with what we knew?* *How did we use this to help us solve the problem?*	Possible answers to questions: (a) *We wanted to find out how many push-ups Anna did on the first day.* (b) *We knew she did 140 in seven days and we knew she did three more each day.* (c) *We made a time line/graph. We compared Day 7 to all the other days, then we compared Day 1 to all the other days.* (d) *This helped us see that we could add Day 1 plus Day 1 plus three plus Day 1 plus six ... plus 18 and this would give us all the seven days.* *We changed this to (seven times Day 1) plus 63.* *We made it into an algebraic equation:* *(7 x Day 1) + 63 = 140 or* $7x + 63 = 140$ *Then we solved the equation to find how many she did on Day 1.*	To complete this activity students need to express mathematical operation in words and to express step by step the mathematical process they completed an the information they found.
Second Stage: after the class has worked through two or three problems, with the class becoming increasingly more responsible for choosing the problem-solving strategy and recording information.		
The teacher breaks the class up into small groups and hands out a problem to each group. The teacher gives groups five or ten minutes to work on the problem by themselves, then circulates, asking each group to explain their problem. She can help the students clarify the meaning of difficult terms at this stage, if necessary. She asks prompt questions, such as: *What is the problem about?* *What do you have to find out?* *What do you know already?* *How will you try to solve this problem?*	Students in their groups are given a problem card. They attempt to work out the meaning of the problem without teacher assistance. As the teacher circulates they explain the problem to her. At this point they can ask her to clarify difficult terms.	Students need to be able to understand the problem they have chosen and how to translate the written words into a mathematical formula.
The teacher checks that students are taking relevant notes. Once students have begun recording, the teacher moves from group to group, helping with the English they need to express their strategies and observations.	Each group nominates a scribe who writes down answers to the teacher's questions. These notes will be later written up formally by the whole group. Additions will be made as the problem is worked through and notes will record both unsuccessful and successful strategies. Observations should also be recorded.	Pre-teach the vocabulary that students may need to express their strategies and observations, e.g. *When we ... the result was ...* *We did ... because ...* *We did ... but ...* *We should have...*
At this stage the teacher provides English which the students need to express their work accurately.	When the group think they have found a solution they need to give an oral account to the teacher. Once the have conferenced their work, focusing both on content and the way it is expressed, they write the problem up in a paragraph.	Revision of English that students need to express their maths problem.

Tower of Brahma – Extension Work in Problem-Solving

The Problem

With a cone of sixty-four disks on one stick, what is the minimum amount of moves it would take to construct a cone of the same height on another stick?
Only one disk can be moved at a time and a disk can only be placed on one that is larger than it.
(Langdon, N and Snape, C 1984)

<table>
<tr><th>Teacher Activity</th><th>Student Activity</th><th>Linguistic Objectives</th></tr>
<tr><td>The teacher puts up a large picture which illustrates the problem and elicits key vocabulary</td><td>Students in small groups (L1 if possible) have a copy of the picture, and try to work out the problem and place it in its context or story. After they have discussed it and agreed on the main points, each student writes a short account of what they imagine the problem to be.</td><td>Focus on the following vocabulary: *priest, gold, temple, stick, disc, Benares, tower, cone, different sizes.*
Structures: *big, bigger than, small, smaller than, one/another.*</td></tr>
<tr><td>Teacher walks around the room monitoring student work and noting any problems. As teacher monitors student
work, she selects an example
that will be used as a classroom activity. She needs to be sensitive to the students' feelings, and ask if the work can be used.</td><td>In pairs, students discuss each other's account of the problem and suggest corrections.</td><td>Students will need to have the vocabulary and the experience of conferencing written work, e.g.
What does this sentence mean?'
Can you explain this better?
Can you tell me more about this?</td></tr>
<tr><td>The teacher selects a representative example of student writing and this is used as the basis for a class correction. The writing is put on an overhead projector.</td><td>The whole class reads for meaning – this will involve discussion of whether or not the problem is explained clearly and thoroughly. If not, students suggest additions or alterations to the teacher, who is the scribe.</td><td>The teacher uses a coding system to draw students' attention to the meaning and the syntax of the paragraph (refer to Learmonth P *TESOL in Context* Vol 1 No 2).</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Once the students are clear about the problem, the teacher asks the class,
How can you find out how long it would take?
Teacher moves from group to group, observing what students are doing and having some input and asking questions.</td><td>In groups, students make guesses about how long it would take. Students then work out a smaller scale simulation. Using this, the students complete the table below.</td><td>Students will need to be able to describe the discs using *bigger than, smaller than*. Students will need to understand how to fill out the table below and what the headings mean.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><table><tr><th>Number of discs</th><th>Guessed number of minimum moves</th><th>Minimum number of moves from experiment</th></tr><tr><td>3</td><td></td><td>7</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Teacher explains that this formula will give the answer but that they would need to work through each number to 64 in turn, so it would take a long time.
She asks the students to find a formula that can be used for any number of discs in a short time.
At this point, the teacher could put up the following sequences and ask the students to make comments:
2x2x2=8
2x2x2x2=16
2x2x2x2x2=32
Teacher wants students to see a connection between these sequences and columns 1 and 3 of the table.</td><td>Once they have completed this, students need to work out a formula or rule for the problem.
Students suggest something like:
$y=2x+1$
where y = the number of moves for a certain number of discs
and x = the number of moves for the previous number of discs.
The students may have a problem seeing that the formula is exponential not algebraic.
Students come up with a formula
$m = 2^d - 1$
where m = the number of moves
and d = the number of discs.
Students test this formula and find it correct.</td><td>Pre-teach the vocabulary that students will need to work out a formula, e.g. language of operations, pronumerals, simple equations.</td></tr>
</table>

Teacher Activity	Student Activity	Linguistic Objectives
Teacher says that the experiment needs to be recorded. She gives guide questions so the answer to these questions will be aim, method, results, conclusion. (a) *What did we want to find out?* *Aim* (b) *What did we use?* *Method* (c) *What did we do?* *Results* (d) *Did we find anything that would help us answer our first question?* *Conclusion*	Students write answers to guide questions, and they complete a written report.	The structure and English language of maths experiments needs to be highlighted by the teacher. With group discussion the teacher assists students by pointing out the relationship between the guide questions to segments of the report.

Conclusion

To sum up, the early stages of the unit focus on familiarising the students with the new style of learning maths which involves cooperative and investigative learning.

The oral and written component of each activity do not place great demands on the students' language abilities.

The main English language demands are those of description and hypothesising at a simple level, demands that can be satisfied in the main by their proficiency in conversational English.

Later in the unit, the investigations become more complex and the students are moving closer to writing a report typical of this genre, so subject-specialist language, use of passives and appropriate organisation of ideas require explicit teaching.

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Making the Process Collaborative

Allan Goedecke writes about using a collaborative-process approach with ESL TAFE students.

Introduction

Her eyes narrowed into what looked distinctly like an accusation of heresy. Had I learnt nothing? Process was the approach, content came from within and form was choice, albeit informed by the conference. Certainly I knew the effectiveness of Donald Graves' approach to writing. My colleague shrugged and I was left with the problem of teaching history at Year 12 to students from non-English speaking backgrounds who had no idea of how to write an essay but who wanted to go on to post-secondary studies. They needed to know how to use academic writing conventions, the form of which is determined by the parameters of the field, tenor and mode in which they are required to write.

When I reflected on the results of the process writing approach used in my junior English classes, I decided that one of its most powerful elements was the way it allowed the process of writing to become demystified. No more were there innately good or bad writers. The writer was freed from the pressures of one draft creations upon which final judgement was passed in the form of grades or passes and fails. The process was allowed to become explicit and consultation and reflection were encouraged.

However the methodology was very time consuming, being based on one-to-one conferences of students' writing. Furthermore, it valued individual creativity and choice but did not take into account the externally imposed discourse forms of academic writing. It was very effective in the junior English class but presented a problem for teaching the seniors who quickly needed to acquire skills in written discourse forms that were outside their experience and who did not have time to discover them naturally (if that is possible).

Could process writing hold a key? The key as it turned out, was making the process collaborative. I embarked upon a strategy which combined explicit teaching about discourse structure and function with lots of cooperative group writing. The students were encouraged to use the conferencing skills they had already developed through process writing, to develop, assess and refine their formal essay writing skills. Enthusiasm was high in these classes and it was exciting to listen to these formerly reluctant writers engrossed in a critical exchange about each other's work.

Some years later I found myself in a similar situation with ESL students in an eighteen week preparatory TAFE course. These students aimed to undertake TAFE certificate courses. There were, however, some significant differences between the two groups of students. The TAFE group was made up of young adults whose education had been disrupted by war or refugee experience. Their English language skills were rated at 1^+ across the four macro skills on the ASLPR. Many had only completed a few years of primary school and so had low levels of confidence in the classroom as learners. If these students were to gain entry into mainstream courses, they would need to develop their writing skills at the discourse level.

The difficult question was how to teach at that level, which after all is a highly developed level of language skill, when the students were still strongly in need of language development at the lexical and syntactic levels. Various folk advised me against the attempt, 'Stick to the sentence, they will only get confused.'

A further consideration was that the course was subject based with specific areas of content such as Australian studies and vocational orientation which had to be covered by the ESL teacher. Fortunately, the course allowed for a number of hours of team teaching which meant that one teacher could concentrate on the content while the other was able to analyse the linguistic needs of the students and the linguistic demands of the course material.

One did not subsume the other. My co-teacher Thérèse Chisholm had undertaken considerable research into the area of systemic linguistics and so we were able to devise a methodology which incorporated her expertise with my experience with process writing and the collaborative approach. The result was a task-based, process model set within the confines of a subject-based syllabus. The methodology is an application and broad interpretation of the theoretical principles of Widdowson (1987), Prahbu (1984) and Graves (1983).

The methodology adopts a task-based approach for the development of linguistic skills. The tasks are chosen for their relevance to the needs of the students and serve to contextualise the linguistic features which are being learnt. The methodology aims to demonstrate to the students the way in which language at all levels is shaped by the nature of a particular task. The approach seeks at all stages to elicit and value the knowledge (both content and linguistic) which the students already possess. Needs analysis is a key feature and explicit teaching input occurs as the need arises throughout the process of task completion.

The model operates at both a macro and micro level. For example, it applies to the completion of a task such as report writing but it might also be employed at the syntactic level before the report is completed, if the students need specific linguistic information to complete the report.

Applying the Model to Classroom Teaching

The students' task was to write a report about Sovereign Hill which they had recently visited. This was part of a unit of work in Australian studies on the goldrush and immigration. After discussion and vocabulary work about the topic, we presented the task and elicited an audience and purpose to establish the authenticity of the task. The audience was to be the students in the next course intake who would be going to Sovereign Hill. The purpose was to inform them of what Sovereign Hill is and has to offer in order to prepare them for the excursion.

In the next stage, we elicited what the students knew of the form and function of a report. Most knew little. Students were asked to work in groups of four to write sentences about the things they thought were most important or interesting about Sovereign Hill. The students then wrote these on the blackboard and the class as a whole suggested correction at the syntactic level. The teachers dealt with any errors left over. The focus was largely on vocabulary, word order and tenses.

Examples of students' sentences before correction:

1. *When we got to shop we saw woman who was wearing old fashion clothes look her beauty nice.*
2. *The man who was guide us go into the shaft and he introduce about its history.*
3. *The lifes miners were very difficult, they work hard by labour too much so they were unhealthy and they died from disease such as silicosis.*
4. *After that we came to shelter and had lunch for everyone ate chiken wing and lamb chop, sausage and orange juice.*

At this point, it was clear that the students were not grouping and ordering information, so this became the focus of the next micro task. The group became involved in debate about different ways to group sentences and this resulted in four broad categories which they labelled:

1. *The mine.*
2. *The Chinese village.*
3. *The public facilities.*
4. *The old fashioned shops.*

Students had difficulty with a couple of sentences about the delicious lunch which had been prepared by the class but upon careful consideration of our task and purpose, it was decided that our report was about Sovereign Hill and not our particular excursion. So, the sentences were edited out of the report.

The next stage of the task focused on the function of paragraphs. The students worked in groups to write up a paragraph on one of the areas listed on the board.

Their work was then transferred to the overhead projector, and again the class was involved in correction. While grammar was looked at, the major need that emerged was attention to relevance and coverage. Were the sentences about the topic and did they give the reader enough information or perhaps too much unnecessary detail?

The result was a list of reasonably well ordered sentences that lacked cohesion. Needs analysis at this point indicated that our next teaching area was connective ties. Explicit teaching followed which

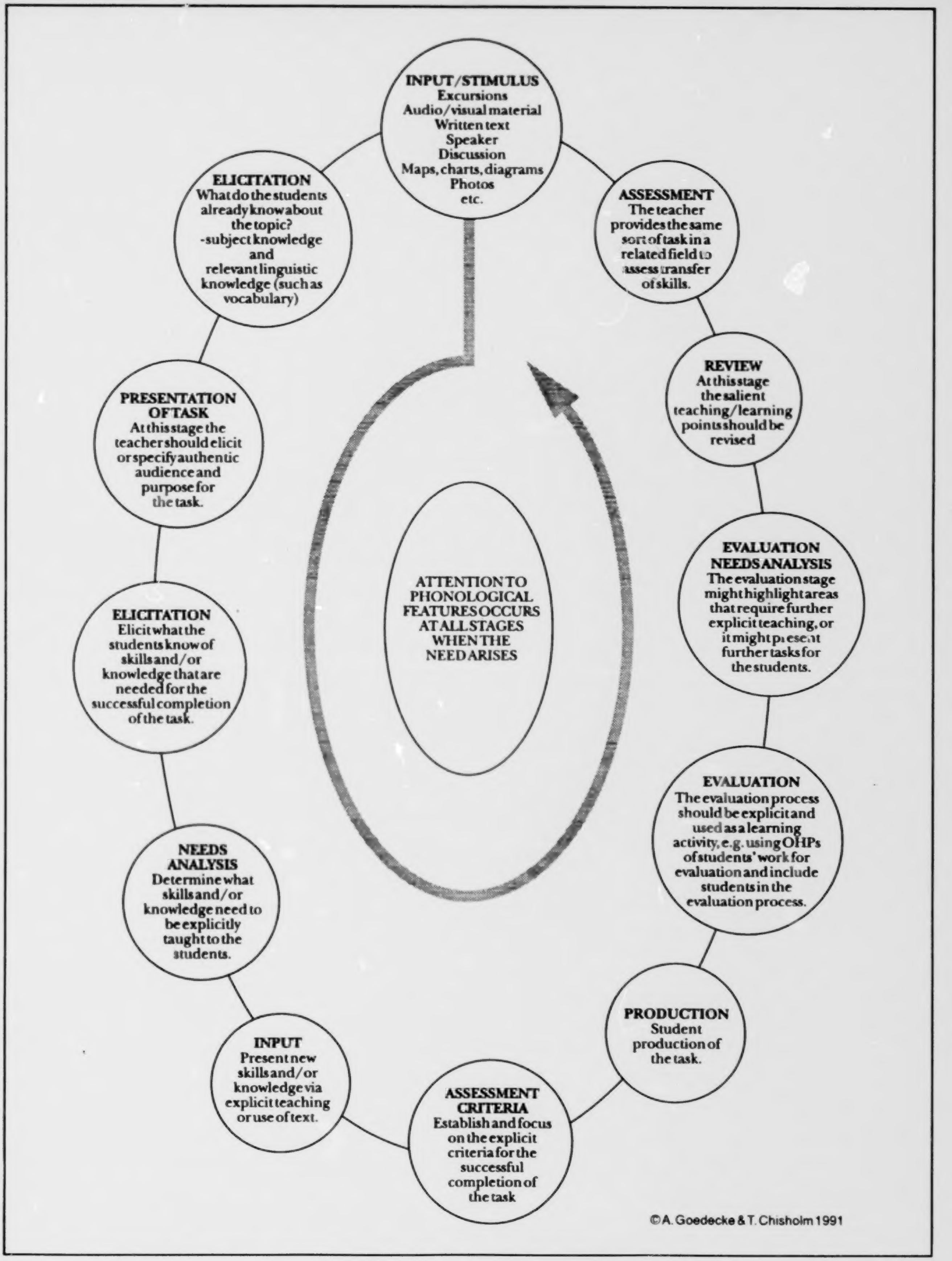
INPUT/STIMULUS
Excursions
Audio/visual material
Written text
Speaker
Discussion
Maps, charts, diagrams
Photos
etc.
ASSESSMENT
The teacher provides the same sort of task in a related field to assess transfer of skills.
REVIEW
At this stage the salient teaching/learning points should be revised
EVALUATION NEEDS ANALYSIS
The evaluation stage might highlight areas that require further explicit teaching, or it might present further tasks for the students.
EVALUATION
The evaluation process should be explicit and used as a learning activity, e.g. using OHPs of students' work for evaluation and include students in the evaluation process.
PRODUCTION
Student production of the task.
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
Establish and focus on the explicit criteria for the successful completion of the task
INPUT
Present new skills and/or knowledge via explicit teaching or use of text.
NEEDS ANALYSIS
Determine what skills and/or knowledge need to be explicitly taught to the students.
ELICITATION
Elicit what the students know of skills and/or knowledge that are needed for the successful completion of the task.
PRESENTATION OF TASK
At this stage the teacher should elicit or specify authentic audience and purpose for the task.
ELICITATION
What do the students already know about the topic?
-subject knowledge and relevant linguistic knowledge (such as vocabulary)
ATTENTION TO PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES OCCURS AT ALL STAGES WHEN THE NEED ARISES

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Figure 1 – The task-based process model

involved the students working as a class to find ways of connecting up sentences. Thérèse focused the students' attention on the function of the various types of sentences and hence the kind of connective ties that would be appropriate.

For example:

1. *The mine tour was very interesting.*
2. *The guide explained how gold was extracted.*
3. *The gold was mined by men and boys.*
4. *They had to work hard for long hours.*

The students decided the first sentence was a statement, while the second could be a reason, so an appropriate connector would be *because*. They decided that the third sentence gave information about who extracted the gold so *by* would be useful. The fourth sentence told us more information about the miners and so the relative pronoun *who* could be used.

The result: *The mine tour was very interesting because the guide explained how gold was extracted by men and boys who had to work hard for long hours.*

Through this analysis the teacher was able to draw attention to and explain sentence patterning and linear development. Rather than become confused by this level of work, the students found it quite engrossing. Secret codes were being worked out. Students resumed work on their paragraphs which were discussed later.

So far we had been working on paragraphs for the body of the report. To illustrate the need for an introduction and conclusion, we looked at an example of a report written by a past student on a different topic. The students either identified the key functions of the introduction and conclusion or they were alerted to them.

More group work followed, where half the class worked on introductions to our report, while the rest wrote conclusions.

Example of introduction

Sovereign Hill is west of Melbourne. It is a recreated gold mining town of the 1850s which has been built in Ballarat. This place is good for people who are interested in the history of gold mining and the lives of the Chinese and European miners. It's a living museum which shows us what life was like for miners 140 years ago.

The same method of group analysis and correction was employed, as used in earlier stages. Finally, the students used word processors in the computer class to type up the final draft which was included in a book of student writing.

The final report was good, but in order to assess what the students had learned and to ascertain what needed to be worked on more, a similar task on a different topic was set. The same methodology was used but with less teacher participation. In doing this, the students showed how well, overall, they had grasped the form and function of report writing. The methodology proved to be a successful one and was adopted for teaching in all four macro-skill areas across the course.

The emphasis on collaborative group work at both production and correction stages can be very positive for the students. Firstly, it takes the pressure off the individual. Individuals can withdraw or engage according to their levels of confidence and linguistic mastery. They can watch and participate as the writing process develops and they can more freely concentrate on the learning without worrying about making mistakes. The real focus is on the learning process and not on passing or failing the task. This is an important face saving element.

The students were very enthusiastic about working in groups and in some cases, clearly relieved by the support it offered them. The opportunity was always present for students to explain things to each other in their mother tongue. Finally, the approach works to develop cooperative work practices which are becoming an increasing feature of the Australian work and education scene.

A point to consider is that not all people like working in groups. In such a situation the individual can work independently in tandem with the other groups following the same methodology.

The method did not, as it turned out, prove to confuse the students, even though they were working at the lexical, syntactic and discourse levels concurrently. It provided a more holistic framework in which the linguistic rules and conventions had meaning and could be contextualised. At each stage students were encouraged to take notes of the main points, complete separate but relevant exercises and keep drafts of their writing as it developed. The students expressed feelings of pride and satisfaction with their final products.

Conclusion

The collaborative-process approach has a number of advantages. An important feature is that the methodology seeks, at all stages, to make form and function explicit and it enables them to be contextualised within an overall task. Linguistic form and function are focused upon, either through elicitation or direct teaching and are reinforced at the student production stage. Assessment and needs analysis are ongoing.

With the group of learners we had to be careful not to assume conceptual or linguistic knowledge across the board. Many students had had only a few years of schooling in cultures where discourse patterns are quite different from those in English.

The methodology works to find the students' strengths and locate the areas where further teaching and learning needs to take place. The transfer task at the end of the process is important in that it serves to reinforce the students' skills and concepts as well as provide a useful assessment activity for both the students and the teacher.

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The Mainstreaming of ESL at Burwood Girls High School

Background and Beginnings

Burwood Girls' High School is an inner west Sydney school with approximately eight hundred students. Of those eight hundred students, between 75 to 80 percent are from non English speaking backgrounds. The majority of these students speak a language other than English at home. A large range of languages are represented within the school population, the predominant language groups being Italian, Greek, Lebanese, Turkish, Vietnamese and Chinese. There are three specialist ESL positions in the school and since 1982 the teachers holding these positions have been based in the English faculty. Prior to 1985 virtually all ESL teaching operated on a parallel or withdrawal basis including Year 11 Supplementary English (nine periods) and the separate Year 11 1982 Transed program.

The decision to take a more structured approach to team teaching arose from the ESL staff's concern that they were not being as effective as they might within the school. They were aware that three teachers could not hope to access what amounted to hundreds of needy students. Ideally, given the diverse composition of the school population it was felt that the language needs of students should be met by all teachers and not just the ESL staff. Through the parallel and withdrawal system ESL staff had taught primarily second phase students leaving the far more numerous third phase students with no real language support. ESL students, both second and third phase, tended to be streamed into lower classes due to their language difficulties. The chalk and talk teaching method favoured by many teachers did not provide situations in which ESL students could experiment with new language and they remained silent and uncomprehending at the back of the classroom or became behaviour problems.

Unable to participate fully in mainstream classes, experiencing only teacher talk and text book language instead of peer language, second phase ESL students took refuge in small groups in the playground or classroom where they could at least communicate in their first language. Lacking the necessary communicative skills in English it was impossible for them to discuss concerns with their native English speaking or more fluent peers. Psychologically, their isolation was reinforced by the isolated location of the ESL classrooms away from the main buildings. This apparently self imposed isolation was unfortunately sometimes perceived by other students and even teachers as a wilful desire not to learn English and occasionally racist comments were heard in the school.

Practical and Theoretical Considerations

As has already been made clear, there were a number of reasons why we decided to change the organisation of the ESL program at Burwood.

I should like to elaborate a little on the two very distinct concerns involved here. Firstly, what was it about our ESL students in the school context that worried us? Secondly, what theoretical input were we getting from research and overseas experience that conflicted with a parallel and withdrawal approach to teaching ESL?

The first concern, the ESL students at Burwood, can be divided into two parts – concerns about the targeted ESL students in the parallel classes and concerns about the large percentage of non-English speaking background students in the school population who were receiving no language support at all from the ESL staff.

Casual observation was enough to confirm that the targeted ESL students appeared to experience very little social interaction outside their own small groups and were painfully shy in many school situations despite several years of ESL instruction. They appeared as a distinct, identifiable flock that clustered in the playground together, flitted between classes together and collectively shrank from participation in school social and public events.

On the positive side, their 40 minutes in the ESL parallel English class gave them the one opportunity of the day to participate orally and to learn in a small secure group. On the negative side, they were sentenced to a possible seven periods without ESL support and they were not given opportunities to interact with native speakers of English in order to acquire the register of peer language that is so important for their acceptance in the school community. Rather than being the bridge that allowed them to fully participate in their own learning in the school environment, the ESL program had become a comfortingly maternal skirt in which the ESL students hid from the seemingly harsh realities of a noisy and bullying mainstream.

And what was happening in the mainstream? Our professional mainstream counterparts were evaluating their programs and coming up with the irrefutable conclusion that the students were not attaining desirable standards of skill and knowledge in their subject. Students in the ESL program were having problems coping with the oracy and literacy skills required of them in the content subject classrooms and the large number of third phase learners in the mainstream were similarly not coping with the literacy demands. Because the organisation of parallel classes reinforced the impression that language teaching was the responsibility of the ESL staff alone, the ESL department met with constant requests that students be withdrawn into intensive so-called remedial classes until they could cope. Alternatively, mainstream teachers could not see a generalised effectiveness of the ESL program filtering into their classrooms and resented students being withdrawn for intensive language help with the perceivable result that those students fell behind in their class work and assessment tasks. With a full 28 period commitment to the parallel organisation, the ESL staff found it difficult to fulfil an advisory role across curriculum to meet the language needs of the students.

So, these were the practical considerations and observations about the then current ESL program at Burwood which set the tone for the change in the school organisation and the role of the ESL staff in the school. The changes which evolved were rooted in contemporary naturalistic and communicative approaches to second language learning. Broadly the theoretical framework within which we operated contained the following assumptions:

- The motivation to learn language comes from the need to communicate.
- Language is best taught in the service of other learning.
- The language that is taught must be the same language in use daily.
- There is no single textbook that can be used for teaching English.
- Students need to feel they are part of the school community from the start.
- The best place for the ESL learner is in a regular classroom.
- Students need a secure non threatening environment, such as a small peer group in order to experiment and take risks with new language.
- Other students make excellent teachers and helpers.
- Activities which are good for ESL learners are good for all learners.

As simply stated maxims, changes were made so that students were given the opportunity:

- to learn language in the context of, and in the aid of, other learning;
- to interact with native speakers of English in order to have a greater number of language models apart from the teacher and to learn the language of their peers;
- for guided discussion and interaction which would aid the acquisition of literacy in the context of a subject classroom;
- to interact with others and participate in their own learning as much as possible.

Organisational Changes to Facilitate Team Teaching

During 1985 a Language Across the Curriculum Committee was formed to examine the learning related needs of NESB students and to make recommendations towards a policy statement. This document took a number of years to complete, remaining in draft form so that it could be reviewed and modified to reflect the changes taking place within the school at classroom, faculty and whole school level. The committee was comprised of the three ESL staff, the Head teacher of English, the Reading Resource teacher and a number of representatives (frequently the head teachers) from different faculties. Because the Committee was so widely based it was in a position to make considerable changes within the school over a period of time.

During this same year, an organised attempt to facilitate team teaching in one faculty was introduced on a limited scale. Each ESL teacher incorporated one team-taught class into her timetable for the entire year. The classes were in the English faculty and both the ESL and Mainstream teachers were strongly supported in this initiative by the Head teacher of English who had a particular interest in language acquisition. Although only three English teachers were actually team teaching the entire English faculty was inserviced in team teaching during the year by their colleagues. Faculty meetings often involved lively debates on language learning theory or discussions of failures and successes in the team taught classroom. The head teacher kept all staff up to date with recent papers on language acquisition which were read and then discussed at meetings. Units of work which had been successful in team-taught classes were written up and distributed to all faculty members.

Team teaching in English was so successful in 1985 and the interest of other faculties gratifyingly high (due largely to the Language Across the Curriculum Committee meetings) that it was decided to extend team teaching right across the curriculum in 1986.

One factor crucial to the successful beginning of ESL team teaching in English in 1985 was the collapse of streaming and the incorporation of ESL students into targeted classes formed within a banded structure along the following lines:

A Model of Class Organisation, Year 8 English, 1985

- **Band 1** comprised two classes one of which was the targeted ESL/Native speaker class, the other a mainstream class.
- **Band 2** comprised three classes one of which was the targeted ESL/Native speaker class, the other two being Mainstream classes.

This original model used successfully by the English faculty was eventually adopted by a number of other faculties.

In relation to class organisation the following points need to made:

- the banding pattern and number of targeted classes were determined for each year on the basis of student numbers, composition of classes and ESL priorities;
- within each band all classes were of equal ability;
- each targeted class comprised ideally 50% ESL students and 50% native or fluent speakers;
- there was a range of ability and linguistic proficiency in each class;
- each targeted ESL class was team taught by an ESL and mainstream teacher.

Having organised targeted classes we were now able to concentrate on further changes at the classroom level. This involved reorganising the physical layout of classrooms to make it easier to use the communicative learning strategies and encourage a language rich environment. Students now sat in groups of four to six and teachers planned units of work which incorporated activities designed to promote discussion

and cooperative learning in pairs and groups. Team teachers became proficient at working together to ensure each had a definite role in the classroom. Care was taken to avoid a main teacher and helper situation. Both teachers having actively planned the unit of work had equal input into what was going on in the classroom despite the difference in expertise.

Team teaching succeeded beyond our expectations with the ESL students becoming animated and confident. Suddenly they found themselves part of the school making friends with students they would not have had the opportunity to mix with before and of course their language development went ahead in leaps and bounds given this very valuable immersion into peer group language. They were now able to ask questions of their peers about subjects that worried them. Their new-found confidence meant they could even speak to the subject teacher about problems that arose. By incorporating the ESL students into the mainstream we had ensured not only that their language skills improved but also their results in class tests in a range of subjects improved. Most of all they had become part of the school community and this inclusion meant that they had gained a sense of belonging and the ability to participate equally with their peers. The generous, cooperative habits acquired in the classroom spilt over into the playground and all traces of racism disappeared.

The Role of the ESL Teacher

All these changes in the school organisation necessarily foregrounded the role of the ESL staff at the school. Our flexibility and goodwill were necessary prerequisites for the success of the team teaching program and we found it good faculty policy to keep the rest of the staff informed of our duties in the school. As a faculty, we wrote and updated a document called *The Role of the ESL Teacher* which we distributed to the staff. It contained four sections – introductory assumptions, administrative role, classroom role, inservice role.

The classroom role that we, the ESL staff, had evolved by 1990 did not just happen overnight but meant a high degree of commitment to our own professional development as a faculty and a commitment to the role of inservicers to the staff as a whole. This most often meant a process whereby we learnt, trialled, experimented, evaluated and retrialled strategies and then passed on our knowledge in a team teaching situation. At its most effective, we jointly participated in this process with mainstream partners who then inserviced their own faculty. In the partnerships that *worked* five essential ingredients were apparent:

- student centred interactive approaches;
- a system of regular coherent planning;
- professional commitment to the students and the outcomes;
- effective communication between the partners;
- blending interchangeable roles in the classroom.

[See *Encouraging Successful Learning* (1989).]

But let us talk about what can go wrong before we get the recipe right:

Some Problems and their Solutions

In its initial stages team teaching can seem a real problem to both the ESL and mainstream teacher. How are you going to organise your time in class together? When will there be time to plan? Who will be responsible for the different facets of each lesson or unit of work? How will I cope with the new subject matter? What will it be like being observed by my colleagues? Exactly what is my role?

The following anecdotal material will discuss some of these problems and show how the teachers concerned adjusted to their new role. These anecdotes are based on situations that arose at Burwood.

TEACHER 1 – Problem: The 'unteachable' class

When we first started team teaching it was not easy to gain access to the mainstream classroom. We had to prove both ourselves and our teaching methodology. Consequently we seldom refused an offer, no matter how daunting. One offer came from a new teacher who had acquired the lower of two graded classes in year 8 Geography. Amongst other things, she was concerned that her attention was so taken up by students with learning or behaviour disorders, that the twelve or so newly arrived ESL students, quietly clustered in one corner for protection, were getting little or no help. Other students were becoming bored. The teacher was extremely competent but the composition of the class made it almost unteachable.

The first thing we did was to have a meeting to establish some ground rules and plan a unit of work. Anxious to impress, prior to the meeting I had read a considerable amount about mountain landscapes. In the classroom we began by putting all the names into a container and drawing out a new seating arrangement. We combated the groans by promising a change of seating every month or so. As the desks were arranged in groups the chances were that they would sit with at least one of their friends every two changes or more. When groups did not work we shortened the time between changes. When things worked well we left things for up to six weeks before bringing out the container with the names again.

Breaking up the rowdy element and using their highly developed oral skills as models for ESL students brought immediate improvement to the daily trial of classroom management. Regular group quizzes with prizes contributed to the realisation by students that every group member had some skill to offer. Our greatest challenge was to devise interesting ways to encourage students to make their own notes, in language they could understand and as detailed as possible depending on their ability. Sometimes one teacher would give a brief exposition while the other would make point form notes on the board. Students used the notes as a basis for writing a paragraph. Often notes would come out of communicative activities for example arranging a jumbled text in pairs or performing and watching role plays showing different aspects of mountain life. We used a range of reference books and provided a variety of activities suitable to the differing abilities of the class. All information had to be interpreted and rewritten. There was absolutely no copying of text from book or board to student note book. Students might have to write letters, poetry, stories, reports, essays, commentaries for slides, plays, dialogues or interviews.

With two teachers it was easy to be creative when planning units. As we became more competent in each other's specialist area we assumed equal and often interchangeable roles in the classroom. We had so much fun we requested the class the following year! Our greatest reward was to see three quarters of our class perform equally with the upper graded class in the common test at the end of Year 9. This resulted in the abandoning of grading in Year 10 Geography the following year.

Teacher 2 – Problem: Diplomacy, or dealing with colleagues who may or may not want you in their classrooms.

All teachers, not only the ESL teacher, feel threatened and unnerved at the prospect of team teaching. It is simply a matter of recognising that the other teacher is just like you with the same fears and misgivings. Properly handled, most problems can be ironed out and an efficient working relationship negotiated.

Take, for instance, the ESL teacher who has been told to work in Science.

The teacher knows nothing about the subject – did not even bother sitting for the exam in high school and hated her own science teacher with a vengeance. To make matters worse it is rumoured that the teacher in the Science faculty does not want an ESL teacher in her class and worse still the class concerned is 8S7, the dregs!

How does the ESL teacher cope?

She arranges to meet the teacher concerned at a convenient time in a quiet place in the school where they will not be disturbed. She immediately lays all her cards on the table admitting to a feeling of inadequacy in the subject area but nevertheless certain that the strategies she has to offer may be beneficial to the students. Surprise, surprise the other teacher feels equally uncomfortable. She is from a non-English speaking background and has been worrying that her English will not be good enough in front of a language expert. Now you are getting somewhere! The ESL teacher, having prepared for this inevitable misconception as to the role of the ESL teacher, explains the methods she plans to use in the classroom with a brief and simple rundown of the theory that backs up these methods. Perhaps a short article could be given to the science teacher – nothing too long or complicated – but enough to explain the concept of communicative teaching and the value of a language rich classroom. In return the Science teacher assures the ESL teacher that she need know only as much as the kids and that year 8 Science is not that hard to master. She supplies a copy of one of the junior Science text books. They arrange to meet later in the week when they will have both had time to read and think about the approach to the unit of work they are to plan.

So the head of the Faculty wants to try team teaching first!

You are an ESL teacher whose second subject is English. You have studied a bit of History but not much and a long time ago. Suddenly you find yourself obliged to team teach not with your mate Frank who works in History but his boss Margaret – the expert – and renowned for her efficiency. Too late to back out now.

What do you do?

You find out from Frank what is programmed for the junior classes and do a bit of reading – not in the uni library – remember you only have to know as much as the kids. All you have to do is devise ways to get this material across to the kids in such a way that they will be using and learning language in the process of learning History. Once you have devised a couple of strategies – ones you have used before are a good idea – approach the head of History with some concrete suggestions for the class concerned which are tailored to meet the needs of the junior program. Result – she is impressed with your preparation and likes some of your ideas and is willing to try them. When one of them goes like a dream you offer to plan the next unit in consultation with her of course, though she is very busy with three unit Ancient History and may not have much time to spare. Do not be put off by this apparent lack of interest. The kids love the Barrier game and the role plays of Sumerians were quite impressive – suddenly Margaret is talking about year eight next year. Your activities are not only language rich they are fun and History is an elective subject. You could make yourself invaluable to this faculty and with the head on your side the other teachers may take take you more seriously.

You have been asked to team teach with an 'institution' who teaches by the book and believes that a well taught class is a silent class. He has been in the school for aeons and is very comfortable.

This is a difficult one and perhaps in the end you will be forced to give up. Nevertheless give it a go, you may be surprised. This teacher will want you to stick to your field – he will be convinced that you should be teaching the past conditional and will feel very insecure if you suggest they talk. Moving his classroom out of its neat rows of military precision will be almost impossible. You will need to supply this teacher with learned documents and good arguments in order to change things. If you can get him to allow you to implement any of your ideas with the class you should ensure that, to begin with, you concentrate on pair work thus keeping classroom disruption to a minimum. Do not attempt drama unless it is a very controlled pair role play to illustrate some point as a model. Practise questioning technique to illustrate to the teacher that the students are not necessarily absorbing all of the fascinating details he is lecturing to them. If you are flexible and persistent you may hit it off. If not, move on to another class. It is a pity to waste time working in a situation that is fruitless and it spoils your credibility within the school.

Team teaching can be a rewarding experience leading to improved professional satisfaction and the knowledge that you are a truly useful and valued member of the school staff. The opportunities provided by teaching across the curriculum to properly gauge students' progress are considerable. In team teaching you can learn first hand the language difficulties encountered in different subject areas and be in a far better position to help students at this point of need. As a team teacher you are no longer perceived as that teacher who works in isolation with

those students. The negative image that so many ESL teachers have in schools which is due very often to their isolation from the mainstream vanishes as their expertise is seen to be relevant through their role in the team taught classroom.

The Current Situation at Burwood Girls High School

The success of the team teaching program at Burwood has meant that all the ESL teachers have full team teaching loads. Their role includes the individual inservicing of staff as well as the creation of curriculum materials to support language initiatives across the curriculum. Faculties are aware of the language needs of students and programs have been substantially rewritten to accommodate the acquisition of language skills as well as content. Faculties have substantially reorganised their class organisation – strict streaming operates in only one faculty and only in some years. A mixed ability organisation across all subjects was introduced at the Year 7 level in 1990 and **will be expanded. English have had mixed ability to Year 9 and bands to Year 12. Science and Social Sciences operate in two bands.**

References

Encouraging Successful Learning, Language Strategies & Activities for all teachers of NESB students Years 7-12, 1989, Department of School Education NSW.

The kit is available from the Resource Services Branch, NSW Department of School Education, Smalls Rd, Private Bag No 3, Ryde, NSW 2112 for $65.

Maeve Doyle and **Janet Reinhardt** of the NSW Department of School Education Metropolitan East Region originally presented this paper at the January 1991 ACTA/ATESOL National Conference in Sydney. Maeve is a Multicultural Consultant in the ESL in the Mainstream Project based at Arncliffe Education Centre while Janet is the Project Coordinator there.

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Look Out: Eight Fatal Flaws in Support and Team Teaching

Chris Davison offers suggestions to help avoid the possible pitfalls in support and team teaching. Support and team teaching arrangements are now very common in the school sector and increasing in popularity in the tertiary and TAFE area. ESL teachers work closely with their mainstream colleagues, sharing teaching space and responsibility for the education of students for whom English is a second language.

As a way of enhancing the effectiveness of the ESL program, such collaborative arrangements have much to commend them but anyone starting out on this hazardous route towards mainstreaming needs to be very wary of the many pitfalls and snags along the way. In fact, effective collaboration is an extremely challenging and complex achievement, not always well-handled and sometimes fatal, for the ESL program anyway! Don't be put off – but do watch out for these often fatal flaws.

Rushing in

Perhaps the most common sin of all – particularly rushing into the mainstream classroom before working out who is responsible for what, and perhaps more importantly, who can do what. The roles and responsibilities of both the ESL teacher and the mainstream/generalist teacher can only be worked out through trial and error but it certainly helps to have some sort of plan at the beginning, a point of departure at least.

Sometimes the best preparation for an effective team teaching relationship is to have developed a really good withdrawal, parallel or intensive ESL program which can act as a showcase for your methodology and materials. Get the potential team-teacher to observe your classes, work with your students, team-teach in an ESL situation. Get them excited (inspired!) by the possibilities of experimenting with similar approaches in their own classes. Let them see you teaching before you expect them to perform in front of you. It is also important for the ESL teacher to have established credibility – to have something to sell.

You also need to create a need for the proposed support or team teaching arrangement. You may be convinced it is the best or only solution but don't assume that everyone else can see what seems so obvious. You may have to do lots of groundwork by in-servicing staff as to the nature and extent of the ESL population within the school and the similarities and differences between their needs and those of the Anglo-Australian students.

You may need to set up a poster and materials display in the staffroom, show a couple of videos, get the administration on side and spend six months discussing the unmet needs of the ESL students before the other staff are really committed to giving support or team teaching a go.

Starting in the wrong place

The second most common flaw is to start in the wrong place – with the students rather then the teacher, or with the teacher rather than the administration. You need to find the most fertile ground and the place where you can have the most impact. If you can work with one teacher and help develop more appropriate ways of catering for ESL students within the mainstream classroom, that will have a snowball effect, both on all the other students taught by that teacher (as well as those in the specific class in which you are working) and on that teacher's colleagues. So, it may be better to work with a receptive teacher even if her students have less urgent needs, because that will then become a successful model for other teachers.

Choice of subject or topic area is also important, particularly at the post-primary level. Don't go into Year 11 Physics if you failed it at school and the very sight of pendulums and levers make you faint at the knees. On the other hand, if you are really interested in a subject area but don't know much about it don't let that put you off. The mainstream teacher will learn a great deal about their own assumptions if you ask the sort of questions that many of their students may be thinking but unable or unwilling to express. Together both of you can then develop strategies for checking or scaffolding the key concepts and vocabulary associated with the particular topic.

Sometimes you need to start with the administration, rather than the teacher. This may be for very practical reasons, such as ensuring that the teacher(s) with whom you will be working are actually timetabled off at the same time as you so that you can talk to them regularly. You may need to do some fiddling with the composition of classes in order to get both the teacher and the students with whom you wish to work in the same class at the same time as you.

Needless to say the timetabler is critical to this manipulation, but the active support and understanding of all key administrative staff and decision-making bodies can make or break an ESL program. For example, in one school the ESL teacher was not allowed to group students at the same language level together in one mainstream class because that was interpreted as streaming and against school policy. Such attitudes are almost invariably due to ignorance, rather than conscious intent.

Expecting too much

This is a very common problem and one which can lead to chronic depression, early retirement or both! Both the ESL teacher and the mainstream teacher may have so many unfilled expectations that the enterprise just sinks under the weight.

The ESL teacher may expect not only change in classroom practices — methodology, materials, choice and sequencing of subject content, classroom organisation, teacher-student roles — but changes in attitude, in policy and in structures, for example, timetabling, resource allocation and assessment and reporting. The mainstream teacher, with little or no comprehension of the length of time it takes to acquire peer-equivalent cognitive academic language proficiency, expects problems to vanish, if not overnight then at least at the end of the term.

Both parties need to negotiate one or two very clear, focused and attainable goals and to evaluate and re-evaluate these at regular intervals. Both parties need to recognise that any long-term and sustainable change, whether it be in themselves or in the students will take a considerable amount of time and energy, that this way of working is very new and experimental and that the school really needs to develop a ten-year plan to support such important innovation, a plan which recognises and provides for the extra discussion and preparation required and which supports and encourages the personnel involved in concrete and practical ways (i.e. additional periods off, no yard duty, higher duties allowance, free subscription to your local TESOL association).

Forgetting your job

A more subtle but very serious flaw is forgetting that you are an ESL teacher and approaching team/support teaching as a simple case of two teachers being better than one. It *is* significant that you are the ESL teacher — you are not simply another pair of hands. As an ESL teacher your job is two-fold — to try to ensure that the content area in which you are working is as accessible and as ESL-friendly as possible so that students succeed in that subject, but, at the same time, using the content area as a catalyst for systematic and planned language development.

The integration of these two goals — language-conscious content teaching and content-based language teaching — is very complex and demanding. It also requires the ESL teacher to have a firm understanding of their own discipline, of the nature of language and second language acquisition, and to have the confidence to negotiate the curriculum with the content area specialist so that linguistically, conceptually and culturally it will meet all the ESL students' needs.

Negotiation involves not only decisions about methodology, classroom organisation and teaching materials, but perhaps more importantly the selection, staging and sequencing of topics in the mainstream syllabus itself. There should be joint discussion of the most appropriate order in which to introduce topics and their depth of treatment, so that students can achieve their general language learning goals, not just the mainstream subject goals.

For example, a science teacher and an ESL teacher might decide to do a topic on the solar system before volcanoes because the first topic and its associated activities uses the present simple tense and key structures and vocabulary for identifying, describing and generalising which are more appropriate language goals for students in the earlier stages of language learning than the volcanoes topic in which the teacher plans to introduce a study of Mt Etna, requiring a range of past and conditional verb forms as well as other syntactic structures and vocabulary associated with narration, cause and effect and prediction. In terms of the scientific concepts, such a sequence may be logical, it may not — that is the negotiation!

Without this negotiation of the curriculum, the students may survive in the mainstream, but their language learning program will be reactive, rather than proactive, dependent on the linguistic content of the mainstream syllabus. If the students are highly motivated and engaged and this content is presented in a language-conscious manner, this may make for a good environment for language learning but the input is generally not systematic nor coherent enough for the many ESL students who need more carefully selected and graded linguistic content.

Again, your choice of teacher and subject or topic area should be influenced by how much negotiation is possible. Some areas of the mainstream curriculum tend to be much more fixed than others. Obviously, a subject in which there is a compulsory text for all students, externally set syllabus or assessment requirements, a rigid timeline and set ways of learning and teaching is not a very sympathetic environment in which to negotiate an ESL curriculum.

Sitting up the back

The most fatal sin of all! You need to be an active partner, not someone who slinks into the class after it has started with little or no idea of what the teacher will be doing and even less idea of what you will do.

The students will not appreciate you sitting next to them, attempting to paraphrase the teacher's perhaps complex and lengthy instructions in whispers while the rest of the class crane their heads around to see what you are doing.

At best this leads to stop-start, knee-jerk-reaction tutoring that is most unsatisfactory for all concerned. At worst, it leads to the students feeling stigmatised and uncomfortable, the mainstream teacher resentful and thinking, quite rightly, that they are doing all the work, and the ESL teacher wondering why she feels so powerless, frustrated and angry.

Start team/support teaching the way you mean to continue – as an equal, sharing responsibility for the ESL students' linguistic and conceptual development. As a general rule, only attend classes in which you can play an active role – for example, taking the whole class for an initial brainstorming activity or vocabulary exercise, sharing the teacher role during group or project work or assisting individual students when the whole class is working at self-directed activities.

Don't be afraid to experiment – try withdrawing a mixed group of native speakers and ESL students for part of the period for information-gap tasks in which the more linguistically competent (in English!) students have to explain a particular process to ESL students who have to do something specific but non-verbal with the information, thus stretching the skills of the native speakers while at the same time giving the ESL learners valuable practice in listening to comprehensible peer input. Both groups are also recycling key concepts related to the mainstream subject matter.

Sitting up the back is only useful if you have *both* decided that, for example, student participation needs to be monitored or the mainstream teacher has asked you to look at a particular aspect of their practice. To be treated as an equal, you need to be seen as an equal.

Alienating the staff

This is all too easy to do and very hard to reverse! The ESL teacher entering into a team/support teaching arrangement always worry that they will appear to be a know-all trying to show these other teachers how it is done. However, good collaboration is like good teaching. If you have started from your colleague's existing knowledge and understandings, if you have established a need for change, if you approach the situation as a competent and sensitive educator, if you are ready to learn together and if you can retain your confidence, enthusiasm and sense of humour, then both students and staff should respond positively to your initiatives, even if some staff inevitably remain a lost cause.

Remember, however, that you will be but one voice among many. There have never been more demands on a teachers' time, energy and commitment than now. Don't compete with these demands – rather, try to show your colleague how collaboration will share the burden, even reduce it. When you look at the things teachers are expected to be coping with – the development of gender-inclusive curricula, the integration of students with disabilities, the profiling of student learning, to mention a few, there is a common underlying thread.

All involve language, all involve greater attention to the needs of individual students, which are the cornerstones of ESL practice. Team/support teaching can complement other initiatives, even enhance their implementation. You just need to develop an appropriate marketing strategy!

RATE YOURSELF: How good is your team teaching arrangement?	
Have both you and the mainstream teacher defined your roles and responsibilities?	
Have the staff been in-serviced?	
Is team teaching occurring in situations where success can almost be guaranteed?	
Are you realistic about what you can achieve?	
Are you an equal in the classroom, sharing responsibility for the ESL students' linguistic and conceptual development?	
Are you showing colleagues how team/support teaching can complement other initiatives?	
Are you sharing information about the progress of team/support teaching with staff and administration?	
Are you looking after your own professional development by joining TESOL associations and attending in-services and ESL network meetings?	

Leaving nothing behind

This is perhaps the most unforgivable sin – condemning all those who follow you to reinvent the wheel. You must document and disseminate your experiments, develop practical policies, and have input into existing decision-making structures.

Evaluate and re-evaluate – Why did one model of collaboration work and another did not? What should administrators and teachers know about your successes/failures? How should a particular faculty take up the implications of your work? Keep notes of all ideas and activities – no matter how rough. Publish and talk about your work – and encourage your co-teacher to do likewise.

Doing it all alone

A final cautionary note about a very common but easily avoidable flaw. Don't attempt to conquer the world on your own! Even if you are the only ESL specialist in your school, even if you are facing a seemingly insurmountable challenge, remember that everywhere all over the country, there are people like you.

Establish or support local ESL networks, join your state TESOL association, go to conferences and in-services, read professional journals. Set up your own professional support structure. Recognise your strengths and weaknesses and work on extending your skills and qualifications. Above all, share your triumphs and your disasters, for we all learn from each other.

Chris Davison is a lecturer in second language and literacy education at the Institute of Education, University of Melbourne. She has had many years of experience as a classroom ESL teacher, consultant and TESOL teacher educator. She is currently Chair of the Australian Literacy Federation (ALF). ■

TESOL Talk

A Collaborative Approach to ESL in the Mainstream

Jenny Barnett interviews Deb Rees who is an ESL teacher at Thebarton Primary School, South Australia. Deb was one of the writers for the South Australian ESL in the Mainstream teacher development course. In this interview she discusses her understanding of collaborative approaches and issues relating to their successful implementation.

DR: My understanding of a collaborative approach is simply working with another teacher to support the needs of the ESL learners in the classroom. That means identifying the needs of the non-English speaking background children, working out appropriate ways of supporting those students, and then implementing a program.

To me there are three elements to it: firstly it's planning and decision making, then it's implementing a program, and then the evaluation and assessment of the program. It's not always possible to do all of those three, but that doesn't mean you aren't working collaboratively. The critical thing for me is the actual planning with the mainstream teacher.

JB: Are you saying that the initial decison making could result in the ESL teacher having no further role to play in that classroom, other than continuing ongoing planning ?

DR: It could be. In fact just this term I've done that with a teacher. I've worked in her classroom all year, and for this term, I've decided that I need to work with other classroom teachers. But we've already had a planning session where I suggested language activities and strategies for the next topic.

Later on we will have more planning meetings to evaluate how the planning is going and perhaps I might suggest other activities. I'm going to be developing some materials for her as well. We informally chat about what's happening as well as having those formal planning meetings.

So, that is one end of the spectrum. And the other end is when you go into the classroom and you are team teaching. But between those two there are a whole range of approaches.

JB: So that sometimes you would make decisions at the planning stage, and then the classroom teacher would be implementing some of those, and the ESL teacher would be implementing others.

DR: Yes. For example with this class I've just mentioned, I've been working with a small group on the same topic as the classroom teacher with the whole class. In discussion with her I've developed activities which are more suited to these particular minimal speakers' English language needs. I've shared with Kerry what I'm going to be doing with the group who needed a small group situation.

JB: You do not use the term *withdrawal*.

DR: No. I think it has a negative connotation and I prefer to use *direct teaching or small group teaching*.

JB: What you are saying then is that that type of teaching, whether it's called withdrawal or direct teaching, can be part of a collaborative approach.

DR: Yes! Most definitely. It's not just me making the decision to take those children out into a small group. The mainstream teacher and I made it together as the most appropriate form of implementing a program for them. Then we evaluate the program together. With this particular class, I've actually done some team teaching as well.

JB: Would you talk about that?

DR: Yes. I've had some strategies for the whole class, but particularly for the NESB students, and we've worked together very much in implementing them in the classroom.

We've been looking at the report genre this last term and we needed to focus more on the verb tense required, so I developed some activities and we implemented them together.

JB: Do you feel that by doing that with the class teacher you are enabling the class teacher to do similar sorts of activities when you are not there ?

DR: Yes. This particular teacher has taken on board many of the strategies that I've modelled in the classroom, such as dictagloss.

JB: So do you see that as an important purpose of working collaboratively ?

DR: Yes, because an ESL teacher can't be there all the time. I think it's an important role of the ESL teacher to let mainstream teachers in on the secret of ESL teaching.

JB: Do you see team teaching as a particularly beneficial way of working, from the point of view of the children ?

DR: For certain children who have been in Australia for a reasonable time, yes, it's the best way of working in the classroom. Although support teaching, with either teacher in the support role, has its place as well. I certainly don't think direct teaching is appropriate for a class where half the class are from a non-English speaking background.

A collaborative approach through team teaching is the best way to be working with those children. Where there's only a very small number of students and the ESL teacher may only be in the school two days a week, then she may have to organise direct ESL teaching in small groups. But I think it is more appropriate for the mainstream teacher to develop the skills and for the children to stay within the classroom.

JB: How do you see the role of the ESL teacher in the collaborative partnership?

DR: I believe the primary role of an ESL teacher in the planning is to bring a language perspective in. The mainstream teacher knows what content they want to teach and the ESL teacher can suggest other content that includes the background of the children. But the primary role is to bring a language focus.

JB: Do you feel the ESL teacher needs special skills to work collaboratively?

DR: Yes, I think they need very special skills: interpersonal skills in being able to negotiate with teachers, in being able to be flexible, as well as a knowledge of the subject and a knowledge of English language. It's a very difficult role for ESL teachers and I don't think there's been enough professional development.

JB: What do you think the school should provide by way of support for a collaborative approach?

DR: I think the school should provide timetabled planning time. I don't think a collaborative approach can work if teachers are having to spend their lunch hours and recess times planning. In some other schools I know where they have had to meet in break times, with the all the other demands on teachers' time, working collaboratively has tended to fall away.

JB: What sort of time would you be looking for?

DR: I think that depends. I've had a half hour planning time most weeks with my teachers, but I've been very fortunate this year because we've had a principal who has supported it, and who has had a .2 teaching load. He's used that .2 to release mainstream teachers in my non-contact time.

JB: What about the system? Is there anything the system should be doing to support a collaborative approach?

DR: Yes. Professional development support for ESL teachers to expand negotiating skills and skills in working with other teachers. It's also really important for the system to provide ESL teachers with in-services to give them an up-to-date knowledge of language and literacy issues.

JB: Do you have any advice that you would give to somebody who is just wanting to take a first step towards working collaboratively?

DR: Yes. I'd suggest that they start in a very small way, and realise that this whole approach takes a long time to develop. I don't think they should feel disillusioned if things don't go well for a while. I've been in ESL teaching for eight years, and I'm only now feeling that I'm doing quite well at it.

JB: It's a question of working out a partnership with each teacher that one works with?

DR: Yes, it certainly is, and that takes a lot of time and energy. You need to choose someone who you feel you can do it with, who you feel comfortable with, who you know has similar beliefs, philosophy of education and methods of teaching and who you get on with really well. Start with just one person. It's amazing how quickly from starting that way things can mushroom, if you are successful. Other teachers can see that something special is going on in that classroom, and they would more likely approach you about starting a similar program in their classroom.

JB: You mentioned success. Tell us one of your success stories.

DR: I've been working with a Reception/Year 1 teacher who came from a school last year with his program already written because he certainly didn't realise the kind of children he would be teaching this year. He came from a school where he had had very little contact with NESB students to one where 70% of the population were NESB, and a large number of those children were Khmer children who were preliterate in their first language as well. But it's really been exciting because from the beginning of the year we've had planning sessions every week. He and I have shared the teaching of his class. There have been times when we've felt the need of the children was such that they needed to be in a small group for a period of time. Sometimes he's taught that group, sometimes I have. We've evaluated the whole program as we've gone on, and he's just so excited about the skills and strategies he's developed that he's applied for a similar kind of school next year; he wants to be with ESL children all the time. He's been so successful with his class that he's been sharing a lot of the strategies with the whole staff.

JB: So you would say a collaborative approach to ESL in the mainstream has a lot to offer?

DR: Certainly. I think working collaboratively has been a really positive step in meeting the needs of NESB children. It's not a task that one specialist can do in a school; it's a whole school responsibility to teach ESL and it can only be done with everyone taking that approach on. Teaching language is part of every subject, and if the ESL teacher can lead the way in this, then other teachers need to take it on board as well. Working colllaboratively allows the ESL teacher to work with the mainstream teacher's skills in teaching language in their subject area.

Jenny Barnett is currently working at the Centre of Applied Linguistics at the University of South Australia (CALUSA). ■

TESOL Reviewer

Recent publications are available at no cost for review. Reviewers retain the books and kits free for their personal use. If you are interested in reviewing books of your choice, contact the Book Review Editor.

All In – Cooperative Education, Making Schools Work for Everyone
Terry Kennedy and Clare O'Kelly 114p
30 minute video
Curriculum Corporation 1991 $49.95 plus handling

Reviewed by Sophie Arkoudis, Institute of Education, Melbourne University, Victoria

With the rapidly growing interest in cooperative learning amongst teachers, parents and academics, the release of the *All In – Cooperative Education* video/book package is timely indeed.

Given the lack of Australian produced materials in this area of educational practice, the video/book package offers highly relevant information, strategies and an extensive resource list of texts, videos and professional contacts.

With the current movement toward having ESL students included in the day to day life of mainstream classes, ESL teachers wishing to operate this way have a valuable resource in *All In*. As well as providing an excellent rationale, placing cooperative learning in the context of its relevance to the workplace and general human interaction, the package provides a wealth of strategies and practical advice on setting up a cooperative classroom. The section on 'Cooperative Schools and Integration' is highly relevant to ESL teachers in that it discusses the issues of inclusion, acceptance and setting challenging but achievable work.

There is no doubt that some of those involved in education will reject the assertion made throughout *All In*, namely that cooperation is more effective both academically and socially than competition. However, the authors of *All In* have obviously invested a lot of time accumulating a wealth of evidence, mostly based on acceptable research experiments and documented in respected journals, to support their assertion.

The logic of cooperative learning is even more compelling after reading and viewing the evidence from the workplace which shows cooperative and collaborative work practices to be far more successful than competitive, hierarchical practices.

The authors have lined up an all-star cast from both academia and the workplace including Dr Bob Montgomery, Professor Maurice Balson, Dr Ken Polk, Dr Gillian Falcher, Dr Michael Norman and Colin O'Keilly, Divisional manager at Ericsson, Melbourne. We also hear from principals and teachers from a primary and a postprimary school, both of which have deliberately set about developing a cooperative school environment in and out of class. The policies and rationales of these schools are also reprinted in the accompanying book and make for interesting reading.

The emphasis throughout is on relevance and advice on practical strategies for implementation. The fact that the authors are currently practising teachers shows through in the examples from the classroom and the recognition of typical classroom experiences, addressing those "What about when..." questions head-on.

If you believe education is made easier if everyone in a classroom actively supports others in their learning, then *All In* will give you the guidance to make it happen. In the context of TESOL, cooperative education offers an exciting new direction for both students and teachers. In this respect *All In* becomes a valuable and practical resource.

Lessons from the Learner
S Deller 79pp
The Confidence Book
P Davis and M Rinvolucri 85pp
Visual Impact
D Hill 67pp
The Recipe Book
S Lindstromberg (ed.) 92pp
Alternatives
R and M Baudains 65pp
Pilgrims/Longman Resource Books 1990
$16.99 each
Series Editor: Seth Lindstromberg
Series Consultant: Mario Rinvolucri
Reviewed by: Ruth Wajnryb

"A series to challenge, surprise and... inspire you," claims the blurb across the publicity associated with the launch of this new series. You can react in different ways, like, "oh, goody! more books, more ideas, something fresh and stimulating"; or, "here we go again, more pat solutions, more easy answers, more one-off boredom relievers/distractions." Sometimes once cannot help but tire of the superlatives that accompany the claims. Especially when the needs of the very wide range of people are supposed to have been addressed: new or inexperienced teachers *and* experienced teachers *and* school directors *and* teacher trainers.

But that is a rather negative note on which to begin a review. Let me balance it slightly by saying that, visually, the series is indeed beautiful. The books literally attract: they make you reach out and touch, flip over and browse. There is an integrity among the design elements that establishes the five titles as companions in a series, but affords each sufficient individuality to let each cover speak for itself and its contents.

The series is a unique venture by Pilgrims/Longman and promises much – that is, if you can go by the reputation of both publishing houses, and if one can go by other Pilgrims cheap inhouse productions that have gone glossy (e.g. *Challenge to Think, Once Upon a Time, Vocabulary*). Certainly, Pilgrims' other materials and the reputation of those associated with them suggest that such a venture harbours success. The adjectives that spring to mind when one thinks of Pilgrims materials are almost always positive: practical, innovative, creative, dynamic, humanistic, reflective.

I did say *almost* always. Something about the easy recipe format of previous Pilgrims materials has been known to suggest a certain facile formula – "here, try this, it works for me"; or, "got some time on your hands? fill it in with this lesson". What tended to be distinctive by its omission was a clearly articulated rationale to underpin the practical ideas. As the 70s became the 80s and then the 90s, this need became more apparent... and still Pilgrims failed to respond. Certainly it has been a while since the heady days when Gertrude Moskowitz' *Caring and sharing in the foreign language classroom* (1978) took humanism into the language classroom in a big way. Sometimes touchy-feely is just that, no less and no more (causing who-knows-what *angst* to the client-learner who came there for language not to self-reveal).

On the whole, it seems to me, after having browsed leisurely through these early titles in the series, that these books have maintained the freshness and a certain je-ne-sais-quoi quality (is it an irreverent search for the unconventional?) that is the central appeal of Pilgrims: and they have, at the same time, embraced a more serious framework, one that you would expect of Longman.

Each of the titles, for example, features an introduction that, to a varying degree, seeks to spell out the rationale guiding the thinking of the writer(s) involved. This is certainly a step in the right direction. (I do not know whether it is a good thing or a bad one that anyone familiar with Pilgrims material will find many old-faithfuls among the materials in these books: you could argue that little is new under the sun and therefore it is good to be reminded of activities that work well: or you could shrug it off with an occasional "been there, done that".)

There is a pleasant balance between the demands of integrity that a series imposes and the need for individuality among the titles. Certain characteristic design features integrate the books nicely into a series: the layout and conversational style of the rationale statement at the start; the easy accessibility of information through the recipe format; the language style throughout (direct, clear, unpretentious); the prevailing learner-centredness of the material and espoused methodology. Series integrity aside, each title is a completely separate, individual and autonomous resource.

The ones that most appeal to me are Sheelagh Deller's *Lessons from the Learner*, and Rinvolucri and Davis' *The Confidence Book*. Deller conceived her book while waiting (im)patiently for her plane at an airport, a situation she likens with prison confinement, being in a queue, or being in a classroom. When power and control are missing, she argues, frustration and rage take over. The result is *Lessons from the Learner*, a collection of ideas designed to make space for learner-generated material.

Such material has great advantages: it draws on the learners as the main resource of ideas and activities; it gives the teacher the sorts of surprises that keep her on her proverbial toes; it caters for teaching contexts where teachers are under-resourced in both materials and time terms; it cuts down dramatically on lesson preparation time. The ideas and their organisation are good; there is nothing earth-shatteringly radical, but I doubt whether that's what the browser is looking for.

The Confidence Book is a bank of ideas for building trust in the language classroom. It is not surprising to find Rinvolucri's name associated with a title like this. This is a book for both learners and teachers, aimed at breaking down wall of isolation and removing the burdens caused by hardened habits of negative thinking. Give the learner credit for what they do know and what they do get right, urge the writers. One senses the counselling debt underlying the book, and of course the spirit of Gattegno and Charles Curran is everywhere.

The book also acknowledges the confidence factor in teachers, ending with some very interesting case histories of interventions in various relations that occur among and between teachers and students. Like Deller's book, this one is a consciousness-raiser as well as a resource. The two of them challenge you to rethink, to reappraise previous patterns and mind sets. There is a jolt or two or three in the reading, worthy experiencing.

I am less excited by David Hill's *Visual Impact*, not because I do not value the place of visuals in the language classroom, but because I do not believe this book adds much to the already existing commercial material of this sort. It is better organised than the classic *In the Mind's Eye*, but much more predictable and safe – in other words, it lacks the very qualities that made *Mind's Eye* such a trail blazer. Also, there are no pictures in the book, a curious omission given the book's content. I must say, too, that I am put off by too many soft-filler type exercises: a collection of one-off ideas tend to become just that, leading to a one-off type of teaching, where the teacher may be unperturbed by the need for the cohesive programme.

Also, I think some of the instructions for the materials are remote and obtuse: e.g. in one lesson you are supposed to break the class into pairs or threes or fours and each group gets "one set of about twenty pictures... showing people in difficult situations", for example, on the balcony of a blazing building; stepping out of an airplane surrounded by masked gunmen; up a tree with a large dog barking below, etc. (p. 29); and then what all this really leads to, is some relatively free practice of a patterned conditional question: "What would you do if you were (... on the balcony of a burning building)?" My feeling is that if you go to the trouble of finding and preparing such materials, you would certainly want more out of them than a structural drill!

The fourth book, *Alternatives*, has a catchy title which is justified to the extent that it has a very novel classification of activities: the use of four categories (games, exercises, conversations and text) derives from what the authors consider are learners' perceptions of what teachers have students do in the language classroom. The introduction makes sense as there is a lot to be said for easing the gap between what teachers think they are teaching and what students think they are learning. This book seeks to go with the current as propelled by the learner. The recipe frames ease access to information and give the material a fresh immediacy. The overriding claim is that language learning does not have to be boring. There are some good ideas here.

The last title, *The Recipe Book*, edited by Seth Lindstromberg, is the one most embedded in the Pilgrims tradition, being a follow-on from the earlier *Recipes for Tired Teachers*. This time the teacher-users are not singled out as "tired", but there is a definite sense of this being a book for experienced teachers well versed in the communicative style of teaching. Most of the recipes derive from the Pilgrims style of staffroom idea-exchange. It is designed as a source of supplementary material for short courses where learners want to improve their overall communicative competence while being brought out of themselves. "Meaning and mental images," writes Lindstromberg, "come only when connection is made with learners' own world of experience" (p. xi); and this is very much what these recipes are trying to tap. The introductory rationale is welcome: here the editor puts claim to a bottom-up search for theory, emanating from the applied level and working up to theory; rather than the hallowed reverse.

Will the later titles fulfill the promise? Let us hope so. if they maintain the rage to challenge, surprise and inspire, there is a good chance they will.

Beyond Methodology: Second Language Teaching and the Community
Mary Ashworth
Cambridge University Press 1985
$19.50, 156pp
Planning Language, Planning Inequality
Language in Social Life Series
James Tollefson
Longman 1991
$34.99, 232pp

Reviewed by Alan Williams, School of Education, Latrobe University Victoria

As ESL specialists and language teachers, we often get excited about issues of methodology and course planning, and so we get more involved in issues within our field, rather than seeing how our work fits in, and getting us to re-evaluate what we are actually doing.

Both Ashworth and Tollefson have a global perspective and look at how language teaching programs operate in different parts of the world. Yet they focus on different aspects of language programs.

Ashworth looks at the relationships between programs and the communities they serve, and argues that E S L teachers need to be more actively politically; while Tollefson looks critically at language planning and provision, and argues that language policies and programs often perpetuate and promote inequality rather than alleviate it. Both these authors provide us with new perspectives and understanding of the nature and significance of our work.

Although originally published some time ago, Mary Ashworth's *Beyond Methodology* is an invaluable resource for all teachers with an interest in the types of language programs they provide. Professor Ashworth who is from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, has produced a very readable overview of the relationship between second language teaching and the communities in which such teaching takes place.

Her perspective is global, and so her comments have a broad view and high level of generality. This is a useful perspective for Australian educators who often feel that they are working and fighting in isolation. The information provided here helps to put our situation in perspective as well as providing clear and concise checklists of factors that can be involved in particular issues or situations. Discussion is in general terms, with a high degree of applicability to any situation.

Beyond Methodology looks at how the community benefits from language teaching and contributes to it. It also looks at how communities control language teaching and how national (and state) policies can affect language teaching programs. Ashworth argues that it is essential for language teachers to be involved in the processes that shape language teaching programs. In short, we must become politically informed and willing to be to become involved in discussion and formulation of policies – timely comments in view of recent events in this part of the world. (The recent Green Paper, the White Paper, the AMEP National Plan, tendering in the AMEP, government policies in the ELICOS sector come to mind.)

Beyond Methodology is a valuable manifesto for language teachers and provides useful checklists and advice for those who wish to become more active and for the groups that represent them.

An interesting chapter on the teaching of English world-wide provides not only an informative overview of the role of English on a world scale, but also a useful listing of the types of job opportunities that exist in various parts of the world. Ethical issues, along with a list of the potential difficulties faced by teachers embarking on overseas teaching assignments are also considered.

Beyond Methodology is essential reading for TESOL and LOTE teachers who have a concern with the place of their programs in the community. The breadth of its description, its thorough listing of all possible factors in certain situations (although banal at times), and its practical advice about how to tackle certain scenarios give us a clearer view of our role as professionals with a responsibility to ensure that our programs provide maximum benefit to our clients.

Tollefson's *Planning Language, Planning Inequality* is fascinating and provocative.

The purposes and implications of language planning in a wide range of countries is examined and the conclusions reached also suggest the need for language educators to be aware of and actively involved in the political and social contexts in which they work.

Tollefson begins by examining the role of a range of social forces in shaping language policies. Practices in various societies, and notions such as power, the state, ideology, hegemony, social structure, structural constraints and class, dominance, exploitation, minority and language policy and planning are examined.

He concludes that while particular policies and practices may appear to be common sense, they are quite arbitrary, and usually serve the purposes of dominant groups. He is critical of prevailing views of language planning theory, which sees language change as the sum of individual choices freely made, and argues that the historical and social forces that limit and constrain the choices of individuals must be considered – not only by language planners and providers, but also by second language acquisition research.

From this perspective, the detailed examination of a wide range of situations around the world, language policies usually perpetuate inequality rather than enhance it.

The examination of each situation is prefaced by a brief portrait of individuals and the choices available or unavailable to them, and media examples and suggestions for further exploration of the issues raised give concrete meaning to the discussion. A fascinating and enlightening range of contexts is examined, including:

- mother tongue maintenance and second language learning in the United Kingdom;
- modernisation and English teaching in China and Iran;
- provision of ESL for immigrants and the English only movement in the USA;
- the role of English in The Philippines, and the language policies of the New People's Army;
- attempts to guarantee language rights in Australia and Yugoslavia.

What is probably most alarming about Tollefson's analysis, is the deterioration of the situation in the two places about which he is mildly optimistic, in the few months following the publication of this book.

The increasing economic focus of our AMEP program, and the failure of the Australian government to whole heartedly implement the 1987 National Policy on Languages, together with the disintegration of Yugoslavia only seem to confirm his thesis.

Both these works are stimulating and provocative reading.

Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know

Rebecca Oxford
Newbury House 1990
$26.95

Reviewed by Carmel Welsh, Dip.Ed. student, La Trobe University, Victoria

With the title, *Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*, I figured this was the book for me. As a student of ESL I thought this book must hold the answers to all the perplexing questions that a teacher faces. Alas, I did not find the answers to *everything* I wanted to know, I guess the mysteries of teaching unravel with experience. What I did discover though, was a very practical and simple guidebook intended for teachers of second or foreign languages at secondary, university and adult levels.

The book also has potential to be used as an aid to *all* teachers who want to help their students to become more active, self-directed and effective learners. Field testing among teachers, teacher trainees and learners has resulted in a favourable reception. TESOL Books told me it had sold out soon after its publication and twelve months later still remains a good seller.

As a language learner and teacher, Rebecca Oxford challenges all language teachers "to help students use better learning strategies, so that their eyes will be more practised, their ears more receptive, their tongues more fluent, their hearts more involved and their minds more responsive."

In this book, Oxford sets out to achieve two basic goals: to help language teachers understand learning strategies better and to train students in using better strategies in the context of a communicative approach to language learning. She presents background information about language learning so that the reader may recognise her purpose and identify the void left by traditional methods which focused on the teacher rather than the student. Oxford then suggests ways of achieving higher levels of understanding and proposes a variety of methods by which this may be achieved.

As a reference or guide, this book is very comprehensively presented both in style and volume. it comprises an extensive range of teaching and learning strategies, lesson plans and ideas which may be followed as they are written or be adapted to a variety of purposes for particular student/teacher needs.

Chapters 3 and 5 focus on applications of strategies and as a student teacher I found these especially helpful. The simplicity of the appendix section enables the reader to locate activities, exercises and strategy applications which will be most relevant for students' needs and circumstances quickly.

As a student teacher, I found the book to be informative, comprehensive and a potentially inexhaustible springboard to further teaching and learning strategies.

Pictures for Language Learning

Andrew Wright
Cambridge University Press 1989
$25.00, 218 pp
Reviewed by Allison Brown, Supervisor of Professional Development, AMES, Western Australia

This book, by the same author as *1000 Pictures for Teachers to Copy*, is full of practical hints with immediate application in the classroom, and it requires absolutely no artistic ability on the part of the teacher.

Andrew Wright is obviously a man enthused by his subject and is skillful in imparting that enthusiasm to his reader. Once you read this book your days of peaceful magazine reading will be over – will not be able to stop yourself from tearing out every picture you see

The book is organised into four sections. Part A discusses the considerations involved in using pictures in the classroom, ranging from methodological applications to practical suggestions for classroom organisation. In this section, the author explains that the games and activities outlined in the book are categorised as *Challenges* or *Opportunities*.

The activities aim to challenge the learner in a variety of stimulating ways – to describe, to match, to group, to predict and to create opportunities for the development of language skills in an environment free from stress and full of encouragement. In the Challenges activities, there is usually a definable goal, whereas in activities categorised as Opportunities, students are encouraged to express feelings and to exchange ideas.

In Parts B and C, the reader is presented with literally hundreds of practical ideas using pictures to develop speaking and listening skills, and reading and writing skills. The Challenges activities encourage students to describe, to identify, to match, to group, to sequence, to order and to memorise.

The Opportunities activities encourage students to express opinions, experiences and feelings, to speculate, to debate and to dramatise. Emphasis is also given in this section to encourage students to create dialogues.

The book closes with a section containing extremely practical hints to teachers regarding sources of pictures and methods of categorising and storing them. Guidelines for creating simple blackboard pictures are also given and these should give hope to the least artistic of us.

This book comes highly recommended. You will not be disappointed by a single page.

Writing to Persuade
Writing to Explain
Writing to Inform
Kathleen Rogers
Hawker Brownlow Education 1987
$19.95 each, 60 pp each
All lessons are reproducible

Reviewed by ML Billett, St Martin of Tours Primary School

These books are made up completely of work sheets which may be photocopied for non-commercial classroom use. The sheets are divided into units and the early units provide exercises in sentence structure and in strategies that will be useful in later units. However, it is not necessary to use the sheets or the units in sequential order. The three books could be used successfully by children in years 4 to 8.

One of the criticisms of present writing programs for primary students is that children are only encouraged to develop skills in story writing — either their own stories or book reviews of the stories of others. A glance through the contents pages of these three books will show that the author aims to remedy this situation.

There are units on writing advertisements, explanatory paragraphs, writing to persuade and to compare and contrast. Different types of letter writing are thoroughly covered, as is report writing and proof reading.

Each individual work sheet is attractively set out with an example of the work required. The sheets do not attempt to cover too much, so they could be used for homework if teachers so desired. Some sheets are designed for the specific purpose of practising writing skills, others will encourage creativity and original ideas.

If using these sheets with ESL second phase learners I suggest that teachers do a complete unit, for each sheet does relate to others in the unit and this gives children the opportunity to recycle the language and the ideas in different and interesting ways.

In summary, these books would help teachers to provide variety and interest in their English language program while giving pupils the skills necessary in many different fields of written expression.

Assignment Writing: Developing Communications Skills
M Rosanna McEvedy and Patricia Wyatt
Thomas Nelson 1990
$17.95, 120 pp

Reviewed by Pam Oliver, St Albans Secondary College, Victoria
The first book in the series was reviewed in TESOL in Context Vol 1 No 2.

The second in a series of three books teaching assignment writing skills, *Assignment Writing: Developing Communication Skills* is designed to teach the student how to communicate effectively and confidently in descriptive, narrative and expository writing. The intended audience is senior secondary classes, adult migrant students, ELICOS, pre-tertiary and bridging courses. It is Australasian in context and approach. It is intended to be used as a class text and work book. It contains a suggested answer key and could be used for self study.

Containing units, the skill coverage is quite impressive, teaching the formation of definitions, classifying, describing places, persons and objects, summary skills, forming flow charts from printed information, converting information into graphic material. The topics in the skills material range from chemistry to biography to algebra. History and finance are represented. The question of style and intention in writing is effectively demonstrated.

Each topic section uses pictures and diagrams effectively, vocabulary and language focus charts are clear methods of presenting key structures. A good number of examples are given and ample practice.

This publication would be excellent for ELICOS, adult migrant, English for academic purposes and bridging courses. As a senior secondary ESL teacher and VCE (Year 11-12) English teacher I have found it has its difficulties within the context of the VCE. The topic material is unrelated to anything being covered in my courses and some of it is not easily accessible to me, for example "How to use a pipette".

To use the units one would need to set aside classes to cover them as they are written. With the pressure of VCE, this is a difficulty. However, as a model for how to develop skills, the publication is excellent. Subject teachers in Australian Studies, Sciences and Commerce may find it of help to their students.

Assignment Writing: Presenting an Assignment
M Rosanna McEvedy and Patricia Wyatt
Thomas Nelson 1990
$17.95, 106 pp

Reviewed by Pam Oliver, St Albans Secondary College, Victoria

Assignment Writing: Presenting an Assignment is the third and final book in a series teaching assignment writing. It is designed to assist students to produce different kinds of assignments, to edit and present the work using appropriate English forms. It is designed for use by senior secondary classes, adult migrant classes, ELICOS, pre-tertiary and bridging programs. It is Australasian in focus, well set out and provides room for students to write.

Part I covers skills in developing a bibliography, including an annotated bibliography, table of contents, finding and recording information, book reviewing skills and report writing for various disciplines. Checklists are given to assist students to check they have covered what may be required.

Part II covers syntax, format and logical sequencing. Quoting, punctuation and footnoting skills are provided. Exercises include word order, paragraph linking and checking for the logical flow of ideas. Students are also guided in preparing glossaries and appendices.

The examples are drawn from mathematics, science, history, geography and commerce. Secondary teachers from many disciplines would find useful material to draw on in developing particular skills their classes may need. Self study students have an answer key to refer to.

TESOL Resources

Sandra Bouwmans and Tony Ferguson have selected and annotated the following list of materials on collaborative approaches in TESOL.

If you know of any resources for either TESOL specialists or mainstream teachers of students who speak other languages, do send in the details: ***TESOL in Context*** would be pleased to list them in our Resources column.

Professional development resources

1. *Cooperative Planning, Programming and Teaching* Project in progress 1990- Mansfield Park Primary School, Mansfield Park, South Australia 5012

   In this school a communication network was established for all mainstream and specialist teachers to plan units of work across all curriculum areas. This may occur formally or informally: structured meetings are held to plan each forthcoming term with the school's nine mainstream teachers and the ESL, special education, resource and environmental education teachers. Informal meetings occur daily. Skills necessary to support NESB children, children with special needs and particular programs in operation are identified and programmed into curriculum areas where they can best be taught in context.

   Contact: Jenny Coats, Mansfield Park Primary School, Dudley Street, Mansfield Park, South Australia 5012 Tel (08) 45 1594 Fax (08) 45 9093

2. Gray-Spence, M & Shepherd, M 1989 *Communicative Activities Across the Curriculum, 7-10* Multicultural Education Centre, NSW Department of School Education, Sydney 2112

   This document is designed to help secondary teachers integrate the English language development of ESL students with the concepts and skills being developed through subject area content. It sets out a range of communicative activities which can be carried out by all students including those from NESB to consolidate and extend language skills. These activities are grouped according to the following years 7-10 curriculum areas: art, commerce, English, geography, health, history, home economics, industrial arts, mathematics, music and science.

   Available on loan from NCIN, Inservice Education Library, NSW Department of School Education, Private Bag 3, Smalls Road, Ryde, NSW 2112.

3. Hill, S & Hill, T 1990 *The Collaborative Classroom: a guide to co-operative learning* Curtain, South Yarra, Victoria 3141. $16.95

   Written in a lucid style, this is a practical guide to establishing cooperative and group learning in the classroom in many subject areas. Although referring to the primary level, the principles of collaborative learning can be adapted for secondary classrooms. Chapters cover teaching cooperative skills, forming groups, from working in pairs to working with the whole class as a group, problem solving, negotiating and dealing with differences and assessment. Four appendices cover cooperative games, activities for pairs and groups and a bibliography of picture books and novels with themes of cooperation.

4. Hopper, S 1989 *Adventure games ideas booklet April 1989* Miller Computer Education Centre, Miller, NSW 2168

   This booklet provides strategies to integrate the computer into the primary and secondary class. By using adventure games software, skills may be developed in problem solving, logical and sequential thinking, and cooperation between groups or individuals. For NESB or ESL students vocabulary, reading skills and sentence structure are developed. Other skills include mapping, creative writing, drawing and notetaking.

   Available in photocopy from NCIN, Marketing Unit, NSW Department of School Education, Private Bag 3, Smalls Road, Ryde, NSW 2112. NSW government schools $12.00, other NSW schools $14.40, interstate $16.80. Quote NCIN no. 21890469 and product no. 05834.

5. Houston, C 1989 *English Language Development Across the Curriculum* (ELDAC) Division of Special Services, Department of Education, Chelmer, Queensland 4068

   The ELDAC program aims to assist teachers in analysing the language demands of their subject, to integrate an appropriate language syllabus into all subject areas and to promote language development across the curriculum.

   Enquiries: Lyndall Davies, Queensland Immigrant Education Support Centre, 26 Glenwood Street, Chelmer 4068.

6. Pak, J 1986 *Find Out How You Teach* National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Sydney 2109

   This is a handbook which provides guidelines for helping teachers monitor and analyse aspects of their teaching: lesson planning, content, technique, classroom interaction and use of resources. Such a handbook would be useful for teachers planning a syllabus together.

   Available from NCELTR, Macquarie University, Sydney NSW 2109. Tel (02) 805 7673
7. Schloss, J et al *Language in Learning Project*

   The project was designed in response to the increased recognition that mainstream curriculum content provides the best starting point for supporting students' learning of ESL. The workshop package aims to make teachers explicitly aware of the language demands of mainstream content and to identify strategies that mainstream teachers can use to assist NESB students to meet the language demands of the different subject areas. Participants' handbooks are available for each of the four units.

   Unit 1: Language Use in Context
   Unit 2: Analysing Written Language
   Unit 3: How genre theory can inform the development of literacy
   Unit 4: Planning for the teaching of writing.

   Available from Immigrant Education Services, Support Services Centre, GPO Box 225, Brisbane, Queensland 4001
8. Willing, K 1989 *Teaching How to Learn: Learning Strategies in ESL* A teacher's guide and activity worksheets National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Sydney 2109

   This handbook is designed to assist teachers in helping their learners acquire study skills. The strategies outlined would enable teachers in a team teaching situation to cater for different learning styles in a mixed class.

   Available from NCELTR, Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW 2109. Tel (02) 805 7673.

Class materials

1. Park, T 1989 *Flowering Plants* Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra

   Part of the Explore series, this material has been developed specifically for teachers who are working with NESB students. They aim to provide: a science context in which students can actively develop their overall English language competence and proficiency; and a variety of experiences that will help students to learn some of the skills, attitudes, concepts and facts encompassed in science courses. This unit aims to familiarise students with the main parts of the flowering plant and their functions. It consists of a student's book, language and science worksheets, a cassette tape and a comprehensive teacher's book. Recommended for ESL and Science teachers of lower secondary level students.

   Student's book $9.50, Worksheets $14.95, Cassette tape $14.95, Teacher's book $11.95 (+ $5.00 surcharge for orders under $100.00)

   Available from Customer Services Officer, Curriculum Corporation, Freepost 210, PO Box 177, Carlton South 3053. Tel (03) 639 0699 or 008 337405.
2. *English Skills for Life Sciences: Problem Solving in Biology* Tutor Version and Student Version 1990, Center for Language Education and Research; Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington DC

   English Skills for Physical Science Unit 1 - Problem Solving in Physical Science Tutor Version and Student Version 1990, Center for Language Education and Research; Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington DC

   English Skills for Physical Science Unit 2 - Physical Science Terminology Tutor Version and Student Version 1990, Center for Language Education and Research; Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington DC

   These three manuals are designed for peer tutoring pairs using interactive, language-sensitive problem-solving exercises in a cooperative learning framework to reinforce basic concepts for ESL learners in beginning science classes.

   Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd St NW, Washington, DC 20037 USA

Journal articles

1. Bejarano, Y 1987 A cooperative small-group methodology in the language classroom *TESOL Quarterly* Vol 21 No 3 pp 483-504
2. Coelho, E 1988 Creating Jigsaw Units for the ESL Classroom. How to Develop Instructional Units for Cooperative Learning in the Communicative Curriculum in *TESOL Talk* Vol 18 No 1 pp 69-81

   How to make and use your own teaching materials for secondary and adult classes using small groups for very interactive learning tasks.
3. *Guidelines: a periodical for classroom language teachers* (Journal published by the SouthEast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Language Centre Singapore) Vol 13 No 1 June 1991 Special Issue: Managing the Language Classroom (1) – Focus on Group Work and Large Classes.
4. Hyland, K 1991 Collaboration in the Language Classroom *Prospect* Vol 7 No 1 September

   This paper discusses the advantages of collaborative learning and outlines how the goals can be achieved.
5. McGroarty, M 1989 The Benefits of Cooperative Learning in Second Language Instruction in *NABE: The Journal for the National Association for Bilingual Education* Vol 13 No 2 pp 127-143

   This article discusses five models of cooperative learning.
6. Reyes, M & Molner, L A 1991 Instructional Strategies for Second-Language Learners in the Content Areas *Journal of Reading* Vol 35 No 2 pp 96-103 October

   This article discusses the planning and implementing of content teaching with linguistically diverse learners and strategies for mixed groups of mother-tongue and second-language speakers.

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Prentice Hall Regents, Englewood Cliffs New Jersey

2. Crandall, JoAnn & Tucker, G Richard 1989 Content-Based Language Instruction in Second and Foreign Languages. Paper presented at the RELC Regional Seminar on Language Teaching Methodology for the Nineties, Singapore, April.
3. Cochran, C 1989 *Strategies for Involving LEP Students in the All-English-Medium Classroom: A Cooperative Learning Approach* Program Information Guide Series No.12, National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, Washington DC Based on the "natural aproach" of Terrell and Krashen. Suggested strategies include using nonverbal responses, assigning and rotating roles and equalising speaking turns. Several learning strategies and lesson activities are included.
4. Garcia, E E 1991 *The Education of Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students: Effective Instructional Practices* Educational Practice Report 1 National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, Santa Cruz, California
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TESOL Troubleshooter

If you have a problem or a solution regarding any of the issues faced daily in the classroom, please drop me a line. The following are questions selected from our last mailbag. I have chosen those that relate to cooperative learning.

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

At my last school, most of the children were English speaking. I had cooperative learning operating really well in my third grade class. Unfortunately, most of the students at my new school are not native English speakers so I'm not sure how they would handle this approach. They don't seem to have enough English to be able to learn cooperatively. I thought I would wait until their English was better developed before introducing cooperative learning to them. Am I doing the right thing?

Uncertain, SA

Dear Uncertain,

My first reaction is to suggest that you are lucky to have students with a range of language and cultural backgrounds other than English. My second reaction is empathy with your uncertainty about how best to teach ESL students. My third reaction is frustration that your teacher training has left you ill-equipped when teaching ESL students. Now that I have that off my chest, thank you for your letter. Yours is an uncertainty experienced by many teachers. One way of resolving your dilemma in the long term is to consider postgraduate study in TESOL.

As for your immediate problem, my suggestion would be that you implement cooperative learning with your class as soon as possible. Your responsibility will be to plan to ensure that the students *do* acquire the English that they need in order to be able to complete tasks and fulfil roles. The best way to do this is to have them *actively engaged* in their learning and one of the greatest advantages of this approach is that it has the potential to do just that. Some of the questions that follow raise issues that you will need to consider with regard to ESL learners and cooperative learning. If they do not cover all your concerns, please let me know.

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

You will probably think I'm an old fashioned primary teacher but my worry is SPELLING. As an adult I have suffered by not being able to spell well. My students are not very good spellers either. In their first language, mostly Italian and Greek, they say it's easy, but English spelling is a mystery. I am in *deep* sympathy, but I also want to help them. We are using a cooperative way of teaching at our school which I like but use a more traditional approach to spelling, word families, lists and what are considered good techniques. Any suggestions?

Haveing trubel, NSW.

Dear Haveing Trubel,

Mie hart gose owt too u. I actually used to spell just like that and bad spellers in our society do indeed suffer greatly. The open letter in *Spel is a four letter word* by Richard Gentry will possibly bring a tear to your eye. One of the most successful strategies that I have used was an adaptation of an article on teaching spelling cooperatively in *Educational Leadership* December/January 1990. This is an American publication but well worth tracking down if you can. I presented the idea at an inservice but confessed that I hadn't had the chance to try it myself. One very clever and extremely skillful teacher suggested that her Grade 5 class was available and she would welcome the chance to observe. About 80% of her students speak English as a second language and a couple are first phase learners.

I started by talking to them about spelling and asked them to identify themselves as good or poor spellers. Having confessed my own history as a poor speller, I asked them if they would try a new way of spelling as a group. They were to work in teams of four, each member of the group had to try to learn their spelling words for a test. Their results would be as a group, so they were asked to hear one another and swap strategies for getting the words right. I then read the words, selected from the current theme, and each student wrote them down. Books were exchanged and each group checked another group for accuracy. There were fewer errors than usual for the poor spellers. We analysed the types of errors in order to address these in clinics at a later date. The other members of the group then worked with anyone who had had an error and the team took the test again. In every case there was an improvement. That had been my promise to the class – that there would be an improvement. My only concern had been that good spellers would give the others a hard time. This was not the case, they worked cooperatively to assist the others. A number of students stopped me in the corridor after the lesson to tell me that they had really enjoyed spelling for the first time.

The teacher invited me back some months later to talk to the students. The strategies that they had shared and used regularly together had enabled one of the poorest students to enter a spellathon and gain a score of 93 out of 100 words. The whole class had wanted to tell me about Antonio's fabulous success. I think that this would only work so well in a class where students had learnt some cooperative skills, but if that is the case I would love you to give it a try. It was a most exciting outcome, especially when on my return visit, I suggested that the students might like to greet me with more enthusiasm than the usual Good morning sing-song. The teacher grinned and said 'I think we can spell that' and the class broke into a chant. One of the strategies I had shared for spelling *encyclopedia* Jiminy Cricket style!

Keep up with the other strategies: syllabification, word families and so on but I suggest you give this a try. It certainly worked well for us. Please let me know how you go.

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

While I encourage my Year 9 students to work together and use language purposefully in my lessons, my worry is that they will not develop the independence that they will need for more senior levels. Some of my ESL students seem to rely heavily on others and often discuss things together in their first language. I can see the value of clarifying content and ideas in the language with which they are most comfortable, but ultimately, it is their English that they will be assessed on. Should I insist that they work on their own in order to foster independence?

Wondering, WA.

Dear Wondering,

There would seem to be several parts to your problem. Is it the collaboration that is leading to a lack of independence? If the content is not clearly understood, how will the students operate independently? Is an independent working style a culturally preferred or appropriate one for some students? Do you develop independence by having to work independently or could you lose confidence? These questions make me wish I was an oracle. Unfortunately, few of us come equipped with a crystal ball. Research indicates that cooperative or group goals must be combined with individual accountability. This research is cited in the *Educational Leadership* journal referred to in the previous reply.

Perhaps you need to build into your program the demand for individual accountability. While working together is an excellent idea, you must be able to identify who took responsibility for particular aspects of the work. If students are working in teams, each member will need to be able to demonstrate skills that you have identified as being necessary.

Take for example, a student being able to present research findings to the class. It is helpful to allow the more proficient or skillful members of the group to model for the others how this can be achieved before they need to present to you or the whole class. The key seems for you to:

a) identify what language skills the students require in order to operate successfully
b) set tasks that will require the students to demonstrate these skills
c) ensure that students know your expectations
d) provide opportunities for the students to have these skills modelled by peers and yourself
e) monitor how the student handles each task that you have identified.

I hope these ideas help. It would seem to be a backward step to limit the assistance available to students from their peers. Please let me know how you get on.

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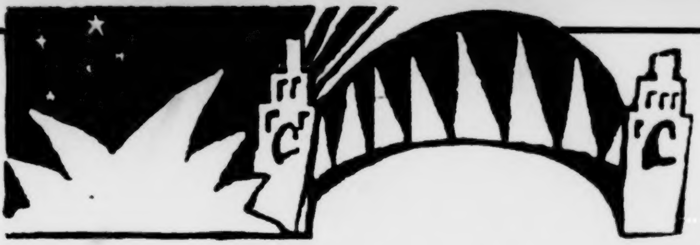

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Assessment

will be the theme of the next issue of

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Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Assessment

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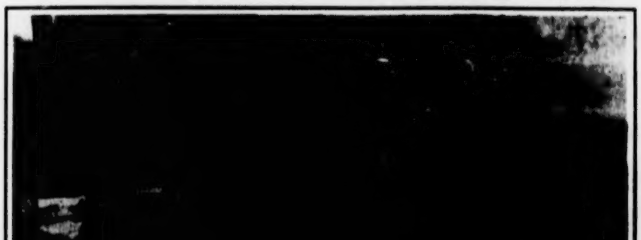

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TESOL in Context has seven sections, which are:

1. *TESOL Issues*, an interactive column where contributors write about current concerns or responses to previously published articles;
2. *TESOL Perspectives*, containing articles of 1000–2000 words on issues, curriculum strategies and policies;
3. *PracTESOL*, which contains articles of 2000–3000 words on good ideas and applications, classroom tactics, materials and units of work and so on;
4. *TESOL Talk*, where practising teachers talk about their work and experience;
5. *TESOL Reviewer*, providing reviews of books and materials;
6. *TESOL Resources*, which includes notices and short, practical reviews and descriptions of human and material resources, with information on where to contact or obtain them;
7. *TESOL Troubleshooter* is a readers' query column, focusing on practical problems and issues raised by readers.

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Contributors should attach a statement of up to 35 words containing their name/s, position and institutional affiliations, and relevant interests and experience.

All references to books, articles and other sources are to be identified at an appropriate point in the text by name of author, year of publication and pagination, (e.g. Cleland and Evans, 1988: 5). For references in an appendix titled References, list all items cited in the text alphabetically by author, and for each author, by year of publication, e.g.

Cleland, Bill & Evans, Ruth 1987 *Learning English Through Topics About Asia Teacher's Book* ESL Topic Books Longman Cheshire Melbourne

Preference will be given to original articles relevant to the interface between the teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages and mainstream teaching as well as practical specialist TESOL material.

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*Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Editorial

In this issue, we explore the controversial but essential topic of assessment, as it becomes more and more a part of teachers' work.

Several of the contributions are linked by a common concern with ongoing, contextualised assessment, offering much more useful information than methods of standardised assessment, which have alienated many teachers.

As an introduction Helen Moore talks to Hilary Hester about this and other matters and places them in a political context.

Elina Raso and Sarina Greco take up the theme in a practical way, with descriptions of methods of teacher assessment and an interview with practising teachers.

On a national level, Tom Lumley and Penny McKay give an update for readers on the NLLIA ESL Development Project, which draws all these threads together.

Priscilla Clarke has useful suggestions for early childhood teachers.

Two articles deal with the assessment of writing: Rosemary McLoughlin looking at Year 12 persuasive writing, and Rosemary Senior, addressing the apparent conflict between assessment and teaching.

Kieran O'Loughlin reminds us of the limitations of cloze and Barbara Cram discusses ways of making self-assessment attractive to students.

Ben-Zion Weiss shows how to use role-play for assessment.

Changing theme, Alan Williams encourages us to reflect on the morality of TESOL.

We also include, of course, our usual ***TESOL Reviewer***, ***TESOL Resources*** and ***TESOL Troubleshooter*** columns.

The themes planned for the forthcoming two issues are:

1. *Teaching and learning spoken English*, and
2. *Teacher research in TESOL*.

Contributions on these themes in particular and on other relevant topics should be forwarded to the Editor **as soon as possible**.

NB: The article *Talking Behind Our Backs: Unmonitored Small Group Interaction* by Kate McPherson which appeared in our last issue was originally given at the ACTA/ATESOL Summer School in Sydney, January 1991 and published in the proceedings also entitled *TESOL in Context*. ■

Glossary

AMEP *Adult Migrant English Program* is the title of the Commonwealth-funded English-language teaching program for adult immigrants in Australia.

ASLPR *Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating* scale which gives an indication of how well an ESL speaker can listen to, speak, read and write English and which is used to place learners in classes of similar levels of English in the Adult Migrant English Program and other adult settings. It is a 12-point scale between 0 (zero proficiency) and 5 (native-like proficiency).

A score of level 1 is roughly minimal survival proficiency, 2 would be minimum social proficiency, 3 would be minimum vocational proficiency and 4 would be vocational proficiency. Level 3 would approximate the bare minimum proficiency needed to take part in other education and training programs.

EAP *English for Academic Purposes/Study Purposes/Further Study* are specific courses of TESOL for students intending to enter senior secondary, TAFE or tertiary courses in various fields. They focus on content and skills for cognitive academic language proficiency.

EFL Students *English as a Foreign Language Students* are overseas students in non-English speaking countries who are studying English. Some EFL students visit Australia to undertake courses in English.

ELICOS *English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students* is the term for short courses for overseas fee-paying students in Australia.

ESB *English-Speaking Background* is the term used in Australia to describe people and communities who speak English as their first language.

ESL Students *English as a Second Language Students* are very diverse in terms of their life, language, cultural and learning experience. Their needs are similarly diverse. Primary and secondary ESL students include:

- children beginning school in Australia at the usual commencement age who have had little or no exposure to English, being recently arrived immigrants or Australian-born children whose home language may be a language other than English, in which they may have some literacy;
- children beginning school in Australia at the usual commencement age who are acquiring English and another language simultaneously at home;
- students starting school in Australia after the usual commencement age without any previous schooling in any country, with little or no English and little or no literacy in their first language, but possibly with work or military experience;
- students starting school after the usual commencement age but with severely disrupted schooling;

- students who arrive from overseas with about the equivalent amount of schooling in their first language as their peers have had in English. Some may have had some experience of learning English as a Foreign or Second Language overseas;

- students (many of whom are Australian-born) who have had the major part of their schooling in Australia but who need assistance to meet the English language demands of mainstream classes;

- students from non-English speaking backgrounds who have specific learning difficulties.

ESL students vary in their proficiency in English. Five levels of proficiency in English for non-English speaking background students were identified by Campbell and McMeniman in their 1985 report *Bridging the Gap* for the Commonwealth Schools Commission:

- *Level 1 Minimal or no English as a Second Language proficiency*

- *Level 2 Elementary ESL*

- *Level 3 Intermediate ESL*: the spoken English of these students gives an impression of problem-free fluency, but their reading proficiency is below their age level and their written work shows problems with task comprehension and written expression. Some secondary students may have stronger literacy skills than oral proficiency.

- *Level 4 Advanced ESL*: students at this level can use English effectively in listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks within a limited range of topics and conceptual complexity, but not for all school tasks. They are intellectually able, but have not yet mastered the language of abstract thought and specific subjects.

- *Level 5 Very Advanced ESL*: these students can use spoken and written English effectively for a very wide range of topics and conceptual complexity and can handle the subtleties of humour, innuendo, cultural references and the like in English.

ESP *English for Specific Purposes* are courses teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages for specific occupational or study purposes, such as English for Nurses or English for the Hotel Industry or English for Engineers.

First-Phase Learners, Second-Phase Learners, Third-Phase Learners. While there are as yet no standard definitions or uses of the terms, TESOL writers in some Australian education systems use them. *First-phase learners* are beginners in English and include learners who have yet to reach fluency and confidence in basic, interpersonal, communicative uses of English. *Second-phase learners* can at least communicate at a basic interpersonal level in English and can function to some limited degree in social and formal educational settings.

Some writers distinguish only these two phases, others distinguish a *third phase* where learners are developing greater competence in spoken and written English for academic use in educational settings. However, the terms *second-* and *third-phase learners* may sometimes be defined to include NESB students who speak fluent conversational English much like their ESB peers in mainstream classes and whose linguistic and cultural competencies and identities may be unstable. They may have been born in Australia and had most or all of their schooling here and know little of their first language.

IEC/IELC *Intensive English (Language) Centre.*

IELTS *International English Language Testing System.* A set of tests developed recently in Australia and Britain and used for selection and placement of EFL/ESL students, especially overseas students, in tertiary education.

LBOTE *Language Background Other Than English* is used to describe people, communities and their children whose first language is a language other than English.

LOTE *Languages Other Than English*, a general term used in Australia partly because many languages are used daily for significant purposes in Australian communities and cannot be considered foreign. Some school systems use the term positively to describe children who come from homes where another language is spoken.

LOTEB *Language Other Than English Background.* See **LBOTE**.

L1 first language.

L2 second or subsequent language.

Macro-skills or **the four macro-skills**: the useful term used by many Australian TESOL-trained teachers to refer to listening, speaking, reading and writing. The ordering of the skills is also significant in TESOL thinking.

NESB *Non-English Speaking Background* is used to describe people, communities and their children whose first language is a language other than English.

TEFL *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* is used to describe teaching English usually as a branch of study rather than a language of instruction to overseas learners in or from non-English speaking countries.

TESL *Teaching English as a Second Language* is the widely used term for teaching English to non-English speaking background immigrants and their children in Australia, especially at school level, to empower them to participate in Australian society and public life. ESL students here are mostly taught in English.

TESOL *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* covers both TESL and TEFL and the whole range of language and sociocultural contexts in which teaching takes place. It recognises that learners may speak more than one other language or that they may be acquiring English simultaneously with another language. It also recognises that the dominance of each language in the learner's repertoire may change over time. ■

The Ethics of TESOL

Alan Williams reminds us of some of the moral dilemmas in teaching English to speakers of other languages and suggests some suitable approaches.

Most TESOL teachers (myself included) regard their work as good work. By this I mean that we regard our work as productive and socially worthwhile. It helps to enrich the quality of life of members of a significant group in Australian society, a group which is disadvantaged in many respects in relation to other groups in our society.

We give our students greater control over their lives by helping them to develop proficiency in English, which is the language of the society at large and the language of most public interaction, discussion and debate. Proficiency in English also gives our students access to many of the benefits which society can bestow, such as education, better employment opportunities, more effective interaction with other members of society and involvement in public debate and decision making.

For those teaching students from overseas many of these aspects apply equally, plus the good will that good teaching can generate in overseas countries. Many teachers have been attracted to teaching because of an interest in helping others, and many have been attracted into TESOL by a desire to help individuals and groups they see as disadvantaged. So as individuals and as a profession, we can feel positive about what we do. Our intentions and our work are all directed to a good cause.

This perception, however accurate or satisfying it may be, is fraught with danger. It can lead us into smug and self-righteous judgments about those who do not share our understandings or concerns, and therefore limit our capacity to influence them and change their perceptions.

More significantly, it can blind us to the need to critically examine and question the implications and the results of our own work, and blind us to potentially destructive and sinister effects that may flow from it. I was reminded of this when a colleague returned from an American linguistics conference in Seattle earlier this year.

She reported that a researcher who had done a large scale study of Navaho speakers in the early seventies wished to replicate this study to see how the language had changed over time. The study couldn't be replicated, as there are no longer enough speakers of Navaho left.

I couldn't help wondering if, at the edge of, or even central to this tragedy, there were some TESOL teachers feeling that they had been very effective in teaching English to Navaho children over the last twenty years. This illustrates how, in societies which are characterised by unequal power relations between groups, language learning is fraught with risks for those in minority groups who engage in learning the language of the dominant or more powerful group. (There is, of course, great risk and disadvantage involved in members of minority groups not learning the language of the dominant groups in a society.)

Learning a language involves learners becoming more like the group of people whose language they are learning. Language learners learn a new vocabulary, syntax, phonology and new ways of structuring discourse.

More significantly, they learn and internalise a new way of looking at the world and of relating to people. For this reason, language learning is often seen as an enriching experience that expands the understandings and perspectives of those who learn another language.

However, when a second language replaces a first language rather than adding to it, the results can have enormous significance for the individual. It can alienate them from their past, their culture, their family and even their identity.

It can lead to confusion and alienation which can be catastrophic, especially if the learning of the second language is not successful and the individual is not accepted by the speakers of the target language as having a place in their group.

In this sense English can be a very dangerous plaything. It is the language of the dominant group in Australian society and is a world language that is associated with groups and nations that have power, material wealth and scientific and technological knowledge.

The attraction of English can be very alluring to both individuals and groups in a variety of social contexts. Where the desire to learn English results in the neglect of and is learnt at the expense of the first languages of learners, the social and emotional costs can be considerable. In such circumstances, the learning of English can result in a serious decrease in the quality of people's lives.

A number of writers have examined this phenomena in a variety of contexts [Tollefson (1991), Ashworth (1987), Phillipson (1992), Rossner & Bolitho (1990)], and warnings of subtractive bilingualism have been around for a long time.

What should be our response, both as a profession and as individuals? At issue here is the question of what responsibility we can accept as part of a larger and often imperceptible set of social, economic and political forces.

It is important to acknowledge that TESOL teachers are not the sole agents in the sorts of processes I've described, and that we may well not have within our powers the capacity to totally negate the harmful influences that impinge on a given situation. But we do play a significant role as the providers of English teaching whose professional training has given us an awareness of these issues.

We cannot say that because our intentions are honourable we don't have any responsibility for unintended consequences of our actions. Most of the worst atrocities of history have been committed by groups who saw their intentions as laudable.

At an individual level, we need to look critically at the messages that we convey, even unintentionally, in our classrooms. Does the way that we treat our students, and the ways that we relate to them, reflect an attitude that English is important above all else?

If this is the message that we convey, then we are in danger of being active participants in the harmful processes I have discussed. Or do we explicitly assign a valuable place to our students' first languages and cultures?

It's not always easy, but it is important that as teachers of English we find ways of acknowledging the value and importance of our students on-going use of their first languages.

Many TESOL teachers have found productive ways of doing this, such as letting students write in their first languages to consolidate their understanding of subject matter involved in their TESOL classes, comparing the words for vocabulary items being learnt across the languages spoken by the students and acknowledging and encouraging students reading in their first language. This can be more difficult in short-term classes or in those with very limited contact time, especially in programs for adults, but it is still important.

It is also important that we critically examine the messages conveyed by the institutions and programs in which we work. This is particularly important in schools, where a wide range of measures, ranging from multilingual signs and sections in school newsletters, through to more substantial measures such as the availability of interpreters at report evenings and culturally sensitive curriculum and LOTE programs are of enormous significance. We should be particularly careful that we don't convey a message that 'English is best'. The message should be that while English has its place and purposes, other languages have equally valuable places and equally useful and important purposes.

At the individual and professional level it is essential that we do not ignore the social context and the consequences of our work, and that we endeavour to ensure that the conditions which give rise to potentially harmful results of TESOL programs do not exist, or are minimised.

This means that we must be socially and politically aware, that we must understand the social and policy frameworks in which our work takes place. This applies to us as individuals, as teachers in specific workplaces, and as a profession.

We must also be prepared to take appropriate action at each of these levels as the need occurs.

The greatest danger is that our work results in deleterious consequences to the quality of life of our students. While the chances of loss of identity and cultural background are greatest with children, it can also occur in adults. Problems relating to loss of identity in children can be extremely disruptive to whole families.

Teachers in TESOL programs can easily become the de facto agents of assimilation. This is a constant tension for TESOL in Australia. In one sense our work is implicitly assimilationist, as we help our students to fit into Australian society.

Under pressures of time and limited resources, we may focus on this assimilationist aspect of our work, seeing it as the most immediate. But if we are not to be agents of assimilation it is essential that we retain a sense of our other vital role, which is to help sensitise and educate the mainstream to the cultures, values, rights, needs and concerns of those who constitute the various linguistic and cultural minorities in our society.

This means taking up this role within the workplaces and educational systems within which we work, and as a profession being advocates for this perspective in public debate, policy making and policy implementation. It is incumbent upon us to take a leading role in promoting and assisting crosscultural understanding and recognition of the nature and needs of individuals in a multicultural society.

This broader role is not so easily fulfilled, either individually or collectively, as it involves working effectively within and beyond our own classrooms in all sorts of ways. In contemporary Australia it is getting more difficult, as public debate is reverting to false monocultural and assimilationist assumptions under the guise of 'economic imperatives'. But if we are to do good work, it is essential that we continually strive to be effective in this aspect of our work.

It is just as essential as doing effective classroom work. It is only if we display a sensitivity to and valuing of our students languages and cultures in our classrooms, and work at promoting such a perspective beyond our own teaching, that we can claim that we are doing 'good work'.

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TESOL Perspectives

Late Night Live

Helen Moore interviews Hilary Hester from the Centre for Language in Primary Education in London. Their discussion presents a number of themes which are taken up in other articles.

HM: Hilary, could you just outline for me the motivation for the *Primary Language Record* and what's happened to it since its beginnings?

HH: Well, it started in 1985 in the Inner London Education Authority, three years before national systems of assessment were introduced. The ILEA decided it wanted an up-to-date record-keeping procedure for language and literacy for teachers. At the Centre for Language in Primary Education, as co-ordinators of this project, we worked with a working party of teachers, a steering group, and a working party that represented the different inspectors/advisers within the ILEA. The inspectors for primary education, for English, secondary education, for special needs education, community home language education, and so on, were all involved. It was an attempt to bring everyone together, to consider assessment together, so that we could have a cohesive framework running through the primary school, which would also have implications for record-keeping in the secondary school. The idea was to produce a framework for all primary schools to work within, making unnecessary any standardised testing for language and literacy development at the primary level. It was also intended to replace existing record-keeping forms that were felt to be out of date. Over the next two years, in conjunction with the working parties and the schools that were piloting materials, we came up with a two-part procedure. There was a formal record, which we called the Main Record, and an informal record, which we called Observations and Samples. The Formal Record was where children's progress at a particular point in the year was to be recorded; it carried through each year, providing an open record which parents had access to, but was also confidential within the school. The informal records were for teachers' own ongoing day-to-day assessment. The relationship between the two was the teachers' ongoing observation and assessment, so out of the evidence you were collecting, through sampling and observing, you drew your conclusions for the Main Record. The idea was for this to be used throughout London, by 1990, and although not all London schools were using this procedure, about two thirds of them were. But then the ILEA was disbanded in 1990, and meanwhile, national assessment procedures were being put in place. There was a fear that the *Primary Language Record* was not going to be a useful kind of framework for the national curriculum, but in fact what's turned out over the last three years is that it gives a very good framework for *teacher* assessment, as opposed to *standardised* assessment. Teachers who were using it already before the national curriculum came in have actually found it invaluable for their record-keeping and assessments of children.

HM: So have schools continued to use it since 1990?

HH: Well, some have and some haven't. The Authority was broken up into thirteen new autonomous education authorities, with their own new structures and personnel. To some extent it went on, using the formal arrangement that we had set up beforehand. I wouldn't have any idea really now how widespread it is across London, because some of the new authorities have drafted their own frameworks. But from next Easter all schools in London will be under local management, so each local education authority is going to have even less influence on what happens, and it will very much be up to individual schools to make decisions about what procedures they want to use. What I think has always bedevilled record-keeping in Inner London is that although there was one format that everybody filled in at the end of the year, what happened within schools and between classes could be very idiosyncratic, and what we've lost, because now there's no formal push for it, is the potential for cohesion in record-keeping, across schools and between schools.

HM: Right. So to go back then, could you tell us how *Patterns of Learning* emerged?

HH: As I said, once the national curriculum had been introduced a lot of questions were being asked about the validity and usefulness of the *Primary Language Record*. In the dying days of ILEA we were asked to look at the *Primary Language Record* and to consider how, as a framework, it could actually support teachers' record keeping within the national curriculum. And that's how the second publication came about, on learning. It's called *Patterns of Learning* because what we tried to work out within it were the pedagogical structures that underpinned the *Primary Language Record*, and those that underpinned the national curriculum. We then set out a map, called the *learning continuum*, on which there were five dimensions of learning, and we mapped both the *Primary Language Record* and the national curriculum onto this continuum, so we could see what each was offering. Subsequently, while people were using the

Primary Language Record, they began to see that the procedures, particularly within the observations and samples sheet (mainly diary-keeping and sampling, with guidance from two reading scales for the reading section on what one might look for in terms of children's progress), also had implications for other areas of the curriculum. So for eighteen months, starting in 1990, we had a working group developing what is now called the *Primary Learning Record*, which covers not just language and literacy, but also maths and science and what are called within the national curriculum foundation subjects – PE, art, history, geography, technology, and then religious education outside of that.

HM: So that *Primary Learning Record* was completed in the last twelve months or so?

HH: Yes, it was first published in the autumn of 1991, and we've had a reprint this year and the notes are just about to come out now, in the next few weeks.

HM: And so with your new found status as a private entrepreneurial venture, how are things going with these materials that you've produced?

HH: Formally we're not a private Centre. We are supported and subsidised by the London borough of Southwark, and within the framework that they provide for us – which means that they are supporting the operation of the Centre – we are also selling our published materials, and proceeds from whatever we sell in terms of materials and services are fed back into the finances of the borough.

HM: I wanted to get your response to this comment: it seems to me paradoxical that on the one hand the government is committed to national assessment standards and so-called accountability by bringing assessment into some kind of consistent form, getting rid of what you said before are the idiosyncrasies of different schools. On the other hand, although in yourselves they had a body that was possibly capable of delivering it, the changes that have occurred by sort of semi-privatising you have undermined your capacity to deliver the consistency they want.

HH: That's totally right. We're in the middle of a big political battle about education: you may have read about pronouncements being made that every child has to use standard English, and speak standard English in the playground – there was a very nice article in *The Guardian* yesterday talking about the way that the Conservative party is trying to hijack Shakespeare, and has always wanted Shakespeare as a paid-up member of the Conservative party anyway! So there's a strong focus, based to a great degree on ignorance, on discussion of what language should be taught, and how it should be taught, and harking back to goodness knows when, the thirties and forties maybe. So if you see us in the middle of that sort of battle, then it's not at all surprising that the kinds of things that we're trying to promote are not being taken much notice of, because we're part of the Old Guard that the Conservatives have been trying to get rid of.

HM: You mean the liberal views of education?

HH: Well, I don't know what Patten called it yesterday (there's a big Conservative party conference going on), but he said something to the effect that 'the Reactionism of the Sixties, or the Trendies of the Sixties, the Lefties of the Sixties are all going to be rooted out, and we're going to have proper education from now on'.

HM: And that's to do with the content of your approach to language, right?

HH: It's partly to do with content, it's partly also I think to do with the way the Schools Examination and Assessment Council, that's SEAC, are actually seeing assessment.

HM: And how's that?

HH: We make it very clear in what we're doing that we talk about ongoing teacher assessment. However, parallel with that are the standardised assessment tasks that are set at four stages in a child's life. Within the primary years they occur at age seven, the end of key stage one, and at eleven, the end of key stage two. Most of the focus on assessment and guidance for teachers has been directed towards helping teachers to apply the standard assessment tasks at seven and eleven. Now, that muddied the issues really, because what our record is about is *ongoing* teacher assessment, and teachers keeping records of their observations of what children can do, which could be matched in for reading at those two points on the two reading scales.

HM: So it's not incompatible with standard assessment at certain key stages?

HH: It's not incompatible, no, but the problem is that the standard assessment is having a huge influence on the way teachers are seeing assessment, as it then becomes something that's set up – it's special, it's not part of a normal context, so it becomes assessment tasks, within which you have ticks for what students can do, and crosses for what they can't do. You can see very clearly the kind of difference that's involved by looking at our reading scales, because we included a lot of -ing verbs in the descriptions, such as 'tackling known and predictable texts with growing confidence' or 'needing support', 'growing ability to predict meanings', 'developing strategies'. Well, within the national curriculum they might not use these words, but it would be '*can* predict meanings', '*are* using strategies'. That's all having an effect on the way that people are looking at assessment.

HM: Could you say a bit more about that? I think that's really interesting because as you know when you were here last year, there was a lot of work being done on scales, and that's still in full flight. Could you say some more about what you think makes a good scale, and what you think makes a poor scale?

HH: Well, it depends what you want it for. If I can talk about the stages of English learning that were incorporated within the book *Patterns of Learning*, they came about for a very particular reason. Bilingual children are served very badly within the national curriculum, and they're expected to perform within it, to be able to achieve the statements that occur within the levels of our system, and there's no acknowledgment that children may be learning a second language, and therefore may need particular kinds of supports or that their progress should be described in particular ways. Now, the stages in *Patterns of Learning* describe the kinds of behaviour you might see in a child as she's moving into English, and beginning to use it, and continuing to use it through the primary school, with no notion within that of sharp cut-off points. With the stages of English learning, or with the reading scales in the *Primary Language Record* handbook, what you're looking at is descriptions of progress, or descriptions that will help teachers to identify aspects of progress. That's very different from the purpose of standard assessment tasks, where you are assessing at a particular point in time, to see what a child can do: to compare what that child can do with the others in the class, and then ultimately to compare what children at that age can do in one school with children in another school.

HM: So are you saying that the framework that you've worked from is one that assumes that there is some kind of ongoing progress, whereas the framework in the standard assessment tasks is, can they do it at this point, yes/no?

HH: Yes.

HM: And the *Primary Language Record* has got a better sense of continuity in describing how you might get to that yes/no point.

HH: That's right. Because running through the whole of the *Primary Language Record*, both the Observations and Samples, and on the Main Record is, whatever observation you've made, whatever conclusion you've drawn, is a question about what experiences have helped and would help the child. Essentially what you're doing is making your observations, drawing your conclusions, and then you're asked to reflect on that to decide what to do next, so that the assessment procedure leads back very directly into planning and into teaching. But what I have discovered with the stages of English learning over the last year is that they're being used quite widely across the country for assessing the progress of bilingual children, within the provision of the Section 11 funding (Section 11 funding is central government funding). People are being asked about the effectiveness of programs. This is quite right in all kinds of ways – if money's coming in to support particular projects for bilingual children, then you need to know at the end of two or three years that it's actually been effective. But the problem is that these stages of English learning are being used to judge that effectiveness. So they're being asked to do what they were never designed to do: basically they were there as a sort of suggested continuum of what progress and development can look like, and descriptions within each of the stages were set out, but none of those descriptions are hard and fast, or cut and dried. They are merely suggestions of what progress can look like.

HM: It seems to me also that there is another big difference, which is that the methodology behind what you're talking about is ongoing observation by the teacher, whereas the methodology in the standard assessment tasks is one-off observation.

HH: It is a one-off observation, but what we've had in the first wave of these tasks is something that is supposed to look like a primary class in practice, so the tasks might be set over two or three weeks. But after the first year this has really proved quite clumsy, and so it is being modified and reduced, and will take less time. So we're moving back to a much more limiting method than the original intention.

HM: So it begins to look more and more like a test.

HH: Yes. The science task for example now looks much more like a pencil and paper test than a proper investigation involving observing what the children are doing.

HM: Whereas with your work you are looking for signs of development based on what other people have seen, what is the basis for the yes/no tasks, the standard assessment tasks?

HH: The national curriculum contains *programs of study* which set out very broadly the curriculum to be followed, but without any prescription yet of how it should be taught, and then parallel to that there are statements of attainment grouped into levels, from one to ten, and within each level there are statements about what you would expect each child to be able to do. So the tasks have been designed for children to be able to demonstrate that they can do these things. The trouble is, of course, all this starts from the questionable assumption that the statements of attainment themselves are valid.

HM: And where do the statements come from?

HH: There were national working parties drawn up for each subject, which set out what statements in each area of the curriculum should look like. One of the problems we've run into is that the working parties in fact weren't liaising with each other. So up until last year the statements for each of the subjects were looking very different. There's some attempt at the moment to rationalise that a little bit. But what isn't being looked at at the moment is the overlap between the subjects, so that the kinds of strategies children might be using in maths, say, and science, which actually can look quite similar when you're looking at them, are seen as quite subject specific.

HM: Was there any attempt in drawing up those tasks to draw from current practice and current observations and to encourage further observations, which seems to me what your material was based on?

HH: Yes, I think there was, and I think that schools that hadn't done any of that work before actually found that process very helpful. But people are still being pushed to see specially set-up tasks as the business of teacher assessment, whereas we are arguing that teacher assessment can be carried on through the normal curriculum activities that have been planned, they don't have to be set up specially.

HM: Right. And that seems to me to be the essential difference between a curriculum that's driven by assessment, as opposed to assessment that's driven by curriculum.

HH: Yes, it is. The other thing we have been doing in the *Primary Language Record* is to do with moderating use of the two reading scales we have across schools. We're engaged at the moment in a small research project looking at how teachers are using those scales, so that we can get some notion of the extent to which teachers are, for example, calling children non-fluent readers, the extent to which teachers across schools are placing children with comparable achievements within the same band.

HM: And how's that going?

HH: Well, we only started about three or four months ago, and it's very interesting. What we're finding is that teacher judgment of what children can do within the framework of those scales is actually proving to be very strong judgment. Research was also done just at the end of the ILEA's life into teacher judgment within those scales and comparing the judgments they were making about children with the scores that the children got on a standardised reading test called the London Reading Test. That was interesting because they found that the teacher judgment was as strong as the standardised test, but the teacher judgment also gave you much more information about the child as a reader, than the standardised test did. And it was particularly helpful for identifying needs of bilingual children, for example, in the way that the test didn't. Another thing were doing at the moment is setting up an archive of the *Primary Language Record* in use, and collecting examples over several years from identified children; we're also getting a small group of teachers together to moderate the use of the Record as a whole, and we need to do this in a very proper way, because you need to be sure that teachers are making the same kind and range of judgments within that framework, so that you can reasonably argue that this is a rigorous kind of framework to work with.

HM: It seems to me that if you took the Conservative rhetoric at its face value, then they'd have nothing to quarrel with about what you're doing, because in fact it seems to me yours is a more substantive attempt to make teachers accountable, and to take assessment seriously. And I think what's most frightening about all of this is that what you're trying to do is opposed and undermined for reasons that appear to be nothing to do with actually what you're trying to do, which is in line with what Conservatives say they want.

HH: Oh, absolutely.

HM: So what do you think is motivating the opposition to what you're trying to do?

HH: Well, many people think that it's a deliberate attempt to undermine state education. Given the state of the British economy, with so much unemployment, and while there is a need for low skilled work, there's a perception among the Conservatives that there's no need for a large pool of achieving working class kids. On another front, the National Union of Teachers last year did a very big survey on school buildings, and found it would take millions to put them back into proper shape; there's been total neglect of the fabric for the last ten years, so things are happening on all fronts. The rhetoric is all about standards, and how we want better performance, but the reality is that the money isn't going into it, and the good things that are being done are being undermined for ideological reasons.

HM: Well, let's conclude on a slightly brighter note, because I know that you've been doing some work overseas, in the United States, and of course you were here last year, so could you talk a little bit about what's happening with the *Primary Language Record* in places other than the UK?

HH: There's been a lot of interest in the States in the *Primary Language Record* itself, particularly in the state of California, and we've been talking quite closely with people involved in the California Literature Project. There was a new state curriculum set up, with literature as one of its strands; the people who were involved in developing the literature side of it became very interested in the *Primary Language Record*, and after a lot of discussion and negotiation in California they've actually made an adaptation of the *Primary Language Record*, which they call the *Californian Learning Record*. It is essentially the Language Record, but it's called the Learning Record. A lot of interest is also being shown in other states. I think that the interest in this kind of record-keeping and assessment procedures, which yield very dynamic pictures of what children can do, is a reaction to very sterile testing procedures that teachers have been involved in for a very long time. People are seeing the value of something like the *Primary Language Record*, and what it can offer, not just for monitoring children's progress, but also for teacher development.

HM: And what about the work that you did in Australia last year, when you were here?

HH: That was for the Catholic Education Office in Victoria. Because I was there for three weeks, through a lot of talking and a lot of in-service work we came to see the potential of the *Primary Language Record* for the very specific purpose that the Catholic Education Office had, for the New Arrivals records that they wanted to develop. [Editor's note: for further discussion of the CEO version of the *Primary Language Record* see the article by Elina Raso and Sarina Greco *Procedures for Monitoring and Assessing ESL Development in the Primary Classroom* in this issue, p. 25–28. For extracts from the Language Record, including a copy of the Stages of English Learning, see **TESOL Talk**, p. 38–39.] In that are some of the essential elements of the *Primary Language Record* in terms of teacher observation of what children are doing within the first few months of being in class, plus a further important thing that I haven't mentioned, that is, the parental element. In the *Primary Language Record* there's a lot of emphasis on consulting with parents, so they can tell you what they know about what the children can do. The other element of course that I also haven't talked about is the child conference, so you're very directly consulting children and asking them what they think about their progress, and asking them to reflect on it within the Record.

HM: People here who've picked it up and looked at it and then put it down say you couldn't possibly get teachers to do that amount of work. What's your response to that?

HH: Well, I think that that's a common initial reaction, which also happens here when people first see it. The thing is, the Record is a way of looking, and it hangs on a whole view of what learning and teaching *can* be about, and the role of assessment within that. People react like that quite reasonably, I think, because there is a lot of work involved, but they need to know that they're going to get something out of it if they're going to embark on it. This is where I think the in-service work is very important, because you cant introduce people to it in a very quick way, or they get overwhelmed. But the other thing that's important to do when people look at it is to get them to answer two questions. Firstly, what are you already doing? A lot of experience from talking with teachers shows they're often doing much more, when they add it all up, than there is in the Language Record. And secondly, how are you doing it? What emerges is they're already probably doing a lot of similar things, in terms of observation and note-keeping, but it might not be formalised in the same way, so they might be doing it on bits of paper, or in their own notebook; people need to be encouraged to see what the *Primary Language Record* might add to what they're already doing. And what it does of course, is give you a very economical shape.

HM: Yes. And an elegant one, may I say.

HH: But you see, with the Learning Record, and what is haunting people is that – we've talked mostly about the Language Record – but then if you think of that amount of record keeping for maths, and science, and all the other subjects, it's quite phenomenal.

HM: And also phenomenal is the fact that you can talk so coherently at what is twelve thirty at night your time. So I think we should thank you very much, Hilary, and say good night.

HH: Good night, Helen.

Helen Moore is Director of the La Trobe University Language Centre, Victoria.

Hilary Hester will be a speaker at the forthcoming ACTA National Conference/ATESOL(NSW) Summer School in Sydney.

The NLLIA ESL Development Project and Assessment in the Curriculum

Tom Lumley and Penny McKay write about the ESL Development or the ESL Profiles Project, abbreviated terms for 'The NLLIA ESL Development Project: Language and Literacy in Schools'. This article provides a brief general introduction to the project and two of its its principal components: the ESL Bandscales and the Exemplar Assessment Activities with accompanying Observation Guides for each macro-skill.

Introduction

The NLLIA ESL Development Project is a project funded by DEET (Department of Education, Employment and Training) and being undertaken by the NLLIA (National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia). Three NLLIA centres are involved: the Language Testing and Curriculum Centre (LTACC) at Griffith University in Brisbane, the Language Testing Centre (LTC) at the University of Melbourne, and the Language Acquisition Research Centre (LARC) at Sydney University.

The brief of the ESL Development Project has been to work towards:

- an increased capacity to measure proficiency development amongst school students
- a better understanding of the interrelationship between mother tongue/English as a Second Language development issues and improved advice to schools about these matters
- an improved capacity to develop an information base to establish needs and policy determination
- assistance to teachers in maximising effectiveness of instruction for students of non-English speaking background
- more accurate targeting of resources to ESL and mother tongue teaching and English literacy
- a basis for ongoing professional development

(extract from NLLIA document, 1991)

The direction taken by the ESL Development Project to meet many complex practical, theoretical and (not least) political demands within the ESL field and beyond is as follows:

- The development of ESL bandscales: broad description of ESL learner proficiency development in English in the school context (LTACC)
- The development of exemplar assessment activities which are designed to assist teachers to assess the most appropriate range of language abilities in the most effective way, according to level of proficiency and age/phase of schooling. Observation Guides are provided with these activities to assist teachers in their assessment (LTC)
- The development of reporting formats and guidelines to guide teachers to report (to other teachers, to parents, to students) in an integrated way on the progress in English of their ESL learners, to take into account important variables such as L1 development and educational background, as well as to report on individual characteristics of learning (LTC, LTACC and CEO, Victoria).

In addition, research into acquisitional sequences in child oral language development is being undertaken at LARC in Sydney. The findings of this research will feed into the various components of the Project, and will make an important contribution to the field of child language acquisition and to the ESL field.

Key principles have been formulated from the wide national consultative process in the ESL Development Project. These include, for example, a belief in the key roles played by:

- the learner's first language and first language literacy development
- the learner's educational background
- the school context and its growing demands from K-12

as well as a commitment to:

- the presentation of ESL learner progress in English as growth in a *second* language
- the presentation, as far as possible, of ESL learner progress in English in non-deficiency mode
- the description of ESL development in social contexts as well as in general school and academic contexts across the curriculum

The ESL Development Project is aiming, through this approach, to assist teachers to assess ESL learner progress in English in a principled, integrated and contextualised way.

Further details about two of the main components of the Project, the ESL bandscales and the assessment activity exemplars, with the accompanying Observation Guides, are provided below. Full descriptions of each component of the project will be available in a forthcoming project report.

The ESL Bandscales

The ESL bandscales are descriptive profiles of ESL progress, as it has generally been observed across a range of learners, within the Australian school context.

This project has focused on two major purposes for the ESL bandscales; these purposes have influenced the nature of the descriptions.

The ESL bandscales are designed to assist teachers to ***report on the progress in proficiency in English of ESL learners*** in their care; they will provide common reference points for reporting to other teachers, for example in times of transition (to a new class, a new teacher) and to parents and students about progress as needed. Teachers will be able to *broadly* rate ESL learners' level of ability in English by referring to the bandscale descriptions and placing learners in levels where their behaviour tends to cluster. Teachers will then supplement these descriptions (according to the purposes of assessment and reporting) with notes on individual characteristics of progress, and with information relating to the learner's background (including L1, educational background) and needs, using the recording and reporting profiles provided throughout the Project. The assessment activity exemplars provided by the Project are designed to assist teachers to observe learners using English in the most effective and most informed curriculum-based activities.

The ESL bandscales are also designed ***to inform teachers about broad steps taking place in ESL learner progress*** in English as they deal with the complex demands of social and academic English at the different phases of schooling. This latter information is designed to promote greater understanding of the needs of ESL learners amongst both ESL specialists and mainstream teachers in our schools. It is clear that there is much to be researched in this area; the ESL bandscales should be seen as a first step towards greater understanding of ESL proficiency development in the school context, rather than definitive statements.

The ESL bandscales are at three phases of schooling: Junior Primary (7 levels of proficiency), at Middle/Upper Primary (7 levels) and Secondary (8 levels). The relationship between these three bandscales and 'mainstream' learner language development is illustrated in the diagram below. The configuration of ESL bandscales is based on previous research undertaken across Australian schools and reported in the *ESL Framework of Stages* (McKay and Scarino, 1991).

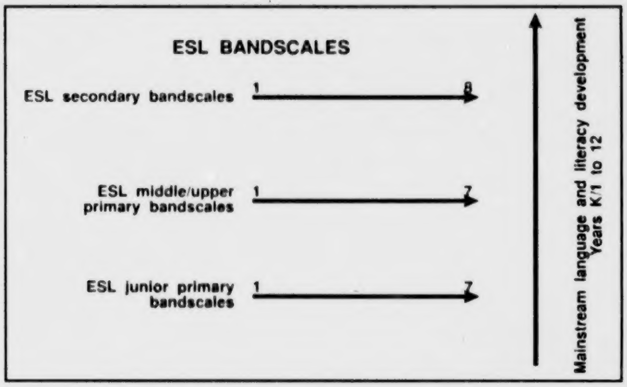
ESL BANDSCALES
ESL secondary bandscales
1
8
ESL middle/upper primary bandscales
1
7
ESL junior primary bandscales
1
7
Mainstream language and literacy development Years K/1 to 12

Figure 1: *ESL bandscales in relation to 'mainstream' language and literacy development, K–12*

The ESL bandscales provide broad descriptions of progress in each macro-skill, that is, in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, for ESL learners at the phase of schooling in question (e.g. at Junior Primary) and within the school context. Although ESL descriptions are separated into the four skills (learners often progress at different levels in different skills, and this needs to be monitored), assessment of progress is done through activities in context integrating all skills.

The ESL bandscales describe a variety of learner backgrounds. The bandscales provide integrated, contextualised descriptions of stages of ESL development, rather than discrete indicators which may be observed by teachers. There is a clear recognition that English is a *second* language for these learners.

Draft versions of the ESL bandscales have been developed and are currently being examined and being used in observations of ESL learner behaviour by teachers in schools across Australia as part of an extensive process seeking feedback on all draft materials from the Project. It is essential to bear in mind that the samples which follow are **DRAFT** materials, which remain to be revised before publication.

MIDDLE/UPPER PRIMARY ESL L2

LISTENING: LEVEL 2

Beginning to comprehend and use routine social language in immediate, familiar environment and exploration of learning in English; drawing on L1 and knowledge of the world in L1 and L2.

Will listen to a familiar story or song and will follow by looking at the book or pictures. Can respond by pointing, moving or responding visually through painting, drawing and construction.

Comprehend and respond to high frequency greetings, courtesy phrases and simple directions. Are dependent on face-to-face contact with accompanying body language. Respond physically and verbally to simple directions and instructions if supported by gestures, repetition and rephrasing as needed.

Need time to ingest new information in a face-to-face interaction before a response can be expected; will depend on repetition and/or simplification on the part of the interlocutor. Will need time for initial processing of questions to occur.

Through taking part in activities with L1 and/or English-speaking peers are continuing to listen and observe, absorbing language and cultural language, thought, with a very limited understanding of English-speaking peer interactions.

May tire easily and appear to tune out because of the effort required to listen and observe (language overload).

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SEC ESL BAND/LEVEL 6–R

READING: LEVEL 6

Progressing in learning through English

LANGUAGE ABILITY ACROSS A RANGE OF PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND GENERAL SCHOOL CONTEXTS

Are able to read a variety of authentic prose texts, with some background knowledge, on subjects which are not culturally overladen, and with some contextualisation (e.g. pictures, graphs) e.g. learner-selected articles in *The Bulletin, Time* magazines; though not at normal speed. May have difficulties if the articles are very complex, lengthy or totally non-contextualised (e.g. Editorial of *The Australian*.) Can read a range of texts for personal reading on subjects of interest and popular novels which are not culturally overladen.

APPLICATION AND EXTENSION TO ACADEMIC CONTEXTS

Are able to skim, scan and get the gist and summarise informational and persuasive school texts, short stories (not too reliant on cultural content). Are able to interpret independently appropriate response to straightforward task demands requiring non-creative, non-manipulative use of known text types.

With Support

Growing abilities in personal, social and general school English may mask weaknesses in academic English.

Are able to skim, get the gist and summarise argumentative, analytical school texts. Are able to read non-simplified set novels, though will still have great difficulty with Australian culturally-specific novels and plays (e.g. *Breaker Morant*; *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*). With support, are able to recognise and interpret the demands of dual-purpose pedagogic written school tasks in e.g. journals containing historical recounts or character descriptions e.g. 'Write a journal which John Smith might have written living in 19th century'.

For learners with ability in specialist area at their level of learning (junior/middle/senior secondary):

Almost always able to interpret material correctly, relate ideas and 'read between the lines' (that is, understand the writer's implicit intents in texts at their level of schooling).

May have developed special abilities in focused chosen areas of study using less complex language (fewer demands on learner regarding amount of language to comprehend, and range, variety and 'mixture' of genres) and/or in less language-dependent subjects e.g. maths, science.

Implications for Placement

A learner at this level would have great difficulty in meeting the demands of senior secondary schooling. The need for ESL support at this level is critical for success in senior secondary school.

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Exemplar Assessment Activities

The principal aims of the exemplar assessment activities are:

- to illustrate how assessment can be incorporated into the everyday curriculum as part of an ongoing process
- to suggest what kinds of assessment can typically be carried out at different stages of teaching cycles
- to form part of a framework that allows for assessment to feed directly back into teaching and learning

The band scales present generalised summary statements to describe learners' ESL proficiency development. In order to make informed decisions in placing learners on the bandscales, teachers need comprehensive information about students' learning behaviour and language use in activities across the curriculum. Such a process entails much more than consideration of a single sample of work, and a more systematic process than comments based on informal classroom observation; rather, it is important to base these decisions on repeated observation, on a range of activities, over a period of time, to take into account the variability in learners' English development, and to enable recording of progress that the learner is making. This process will also, of course, provide considerable additional information to that offered by the bandscales, which in turn will inform teaching and learning. For further discussion of ongoing teacher assessment, read the interview with Hilary Hester in ***TESOL Talk*** in this issue and the article by Elina Raso and Sarina Greco, *Procedures for Monitoring and Assessing in the Primary Classroom*; although both articles describe the primary context, the issues apply just as well to the secondary classroom.

The second major component of this project, the exemplar assessment activities, therefore includes suggestions about how such information may be collected.

Assessment activities in the curriculum

Because teacher assessment is a continual process, it should be carried out as an integral part of the teaching cycle in everyday curriculum activities. There are various ways in which assessments may be made (including informal observation, planned observation, collecting and analysing samples, discussion, peer assessment and student self-assessment). This project presents ***draft exemplars*** of how assessment in the curriculum can be carried out.

Section A **Assessment in the curriculum — exemplar**

Target group: **Phase/Year(s) of schooling:** Years 5/6 — Lower secondary **Proficiency level(s):** NA lower intermediate **higher** all	**Curriculum area:** Social Education / integrated curriculum **Topic / theme:** Proposal for class excursion	**Planned assessment activity*:** Argument: oral presentation to class **Macro-skill(s):** Listening **Speaking**

Description of the teaching cycle:

Assumed background knowledge / familiarity with task type

– some familiarity with research skills (using library, telephone, phone directory, newspapers, tourist literature) – knowledge about local / suitable places of interest	– experience in: co-operative / group learning tasks; negotiating / decision-making with peers; making an oral presentation to class; use of persuasive arguments

Stages in teaching cycle	**Possibilities for assessment**				
	informal observation	planned observation	discussion	analysis of samples	peer / self-assessment
– as a class, research one possible excursion, with teacher guidance focusing on: locating appropriate materials, extracting information from different source materials, practising telephone techniques, ways of recording / presenting information, use of persuasive arguments	☆				
– explain task / set purpose of activity: to present a proposal for a class excursion, supported by research			☆		
– brainstorm ideas in groups. Groups reach consensus on one idea	☆				
– groups decide what research must be conducted, and how, to obtain adequate information about destination / activities / transport / cost, etc.	☆		☆		
– division of tasks between group members / carrying out research	☆	☆	☆	☆	
– group to organise information and prepare oral presentation	☆				
*** planned assessment activity: Oral presentation to class**			★		☆

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Section B **Planned assessment activity**

Description of activity

* **'Oral presentation to class'**

– One or more group members to give oral presentation (5-7 minutes) to the class, providing an argument on the topic,

'Why our suggestion for an excursion should prevail'

Suggested main aspects of language use to be assessed

–appropriate content: arguments, ideas & evidence
– cohesion: linking of ideas
– appropriate conclusion
– as relevant to each student (see guide)
– pronunciation / stress / intonation
– effect on listener / clarity or argument
– interaction with audience (e.g. eye contact, stressing arguments)
– use of visual material

Guidelines

Organisation (e.g. individual / pairs / group; level of formality)

– One or more group members present the argument to the class
– teacher systematically assesses and records aspects of language use related to this activity

Constraints / conditions of activity (e.g. time allowed, drafting, editing, amount and type of teacher support, use of dictionary)

– Adequate time for preparation of talk must be allowed. This may entail additional time for ESL learners.
– Talk should last 5-7 minutes
– Arguments must be supported by group's research
– This may include the use of posters, OHTs, etc.
– Teacher may assist in all stages of activity, as necessary.

Peer / self-assessment: possible approaches

– peers may assess students' presentations
– group assessment: reflect on effectiveness of group's argument
– individual assessment: reflect on presentation

Possible resources (for teaching cycle)

– newspapers, travel brochures, publicity information from places providing educational tours (e.g. museums, national parks) etc.

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Each exemplar will present a possible teaching cycle, including a series of stages integrating all of the macro-skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Within each exemplar, a single stage will be focused on as an example of a suitable Planned Assessment Activity. This Planned Assessment Activity will:

- provide a clear description of what is expected of the students
- suggest elements of ESL development to be considered
- suggest possibilities for student self-assessment

The exemplars will be closely specified and tied to particular classroom contexts, but it is important to emphasise that they are exemplars only, designed to represent models of appropriate activities, on the basis of which teachers can develop their own activities or tasks relevant to the context of their own classroom and curriculum.

Activities will be linked to one (or more) phase(s) of schooling (Junior Primary, Middle/Upper Primary and Secondary), and may be further described as suitable for particular year levels within these phases.

The Planned Assessment Activities will *focus* on one or sometimes two of the macro-skills. This is not to suggest that the macro-skills are separable, or that other skills will not be involved in any given activity. However, since the bandscales, for pragmatic reasons, have adopted the familiar division into four skills, and since learners may show differential development between the macro- skills, it is seen as helpful to encourage teachers to focus on one or two of these skills during particular activities. To take account of the substantial differences in ESL proficiency levels demonstrated by learners, and the kinds of activities that will therefore be appropriate to use with them (e.g. differences between curriculum in Intensive English Centres and mainstream classes), activities will also be described as appropriate for different levels of English proficiency, provisionally identified as follows: *New Arrivals, Lower, Intermediate* and *Advanced*.

Observation guides

Accompanying the activity/task descriptions there will be observation guides, listing categories of language ability (e.g. ability to self-correct, ability to skim/scan) or language use for each macro-skill. These are designed to assist teachers in focusing on a *comprehensive* range of linguistic behaviours exhibited by the learner. Teachers will of course wish to comment on additional features they consider relevant.

The draft observation guides so far prepared are still to be revised, but the following example provides an indication of how the elements of language relevant to the macro-skill of speaking can be categorised (see page 15).

Reporting

Reporting formats are still to be finalised, but they will incorporate suggestions for ways of making ongoing records of formal and informal observation and

student self-assessment. The records so produced will form the basis for reporting to other teachers, schools, parents, students and education systems, as well as informing plans for future teaching and learning.

Conclusion

On the basis of comments provided by teachers in all systems, in all states and territories, revisions will be made to all materials so far produced, the ESL bandscales themselves, as well as the content and format of the supporting materials, the exemplar activities and the observation guides. A full report will be produced by the end of the year, together with a manual with a detailed description of how assessment can be carried out using the bandscales, including suggestions for reporting formats. In coming years, with the assistance of professional development programs, it is the hope of all those involved in the project that assessment of ESL development in schools will become both more systematic and more useful in its ability to promote effective teaching and learning.

Since assessment and reporting of ESL development is clearly a highly complex and little-researched area of education, further research and development should be seen as an integral feature of the future use of the ESL Development materials in schools.

Reference

McKay, P and A Scarino 1991 *ESL Framework of Stages: An Approach to ESL Learning in Schools, K–12* Curriculum Corporation Melbourne

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OBSERVATION GUIDE – SPEAKING

Select criteria appropriate to activity according to whether you are assessing:

A. presentations to group / class (assessment based on more formal, structured activities)

B. classroom conversation (more general interaction, assessment based more on informal observation)

C. group work (focused on learning task, assessment based on formal or informal observation)

content and organisation	• inclusion of – main points – detail • relevance (ability to stay on topic / inclusion of irrelevant information) • appropriate structure / sequencing (for oral presentations)
cohesion within text	• use of conjunctions • time phrases • use of nouns / pronouns (to refer to ideas within the text, e.g. *cars ... they ... my mother's ... the one I saw yesterday...*) • ellipsis / omission / substitution (e.g. *some people are wonderful, but some aren't (...). Will he come? I don't think so*)
formal features of language	• use of vocabulary – range to make meaning clear / express ideas precisely – choice / variety of words and expressions (e.g. to maintain listener interest) – range of idiomatic language – use of precise or technical words / expressions instead of common words • grammatical accuracy: – use of tenses / range available (e.g. past for recounts, reports; present for procedures) – pronouns – singular/plural; Subject/Verb agreement – articles – prepositions
overall communicative effect	• register / formality (e.g. use of slang / colloquial / academic language) • fluency / effect on listener – need to infer meaning (due to limitations of vocabulary or syntax) – as affected by hesitation, excessive back-tracking, repetition, speed of delivery, etc. • pronunciation (e.g. clarity of final consonants, need for repetition to be understood) • stress on important syllables / words • intonation (e.g. varied appropriately) • use of body language • sensitivity to / interaction with audience (e.g. eye contact, ability to reformulate, recognition of need to repeat utterances)
participation/ interaction	• in range of tasks • in different social contexts: – one-to-one, small group, whole class discussion – with different roles of interlocutors, e.g. peers / adults / (un)familiar – according to sympathy / patience of interlocutor • appropriate response to interlocutor (e.g. answering questions) • initiation / sustaining conversation / spontaneity
strategies	• asking for repetition / explanation • self-correction • avoidance (e.g. reliance on peers / familiar speech patterns)

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Assessment for Year 12 Students — a Case Study

Rosemary McLoughlin's case study of ESB and ESL students' performance in English Common Assessment Task (CAT) One in the controversial Victorian Certificate of Education reveals some contrasts in the students' approaches to persuasive writing and has implications for teaching ESL learners.

Introduction

Assessment of ESL students is always problematical for reasons fundamental to language testing, like what aspects of performance and/or competence are being tested. When the students involved are completing their VCE, the complexity of the assessments is magnified. Language testing issues are still lurking but the focus for key people (like teachers) is on the practical rather than on theoretical investigation of the issues.

Given the newness of the VCE English Study Design and associated assessment procedures there are many questions requiring exploration, e.g., How are ESL students fitting with the 'common but flexible' English Study Design? How do ESL students fare in the common assessment tasks? Teachers find some answers 'in flight' and as they share strategies and resources in formally and informally organised networks.

Now, two years into implementation (for English) there is also available for analysis a pool of student responses to the CATs. These provide for teachers a rich source of information about a range of theoretical and practical concerns. The study reported here draws on this pool of publicly available and graded student texts, written as part of English CAT One, Presentation of an Issue (VCAB Samples 1991 & 1992).

Some Context

The Presentation of an Issue CAT, which is completed over a period of time, not under examination conditions, requires students to complete two tasks. First (Part A) to analyse media texts about an approved topic and second (Part B) to write a persuasive piece presenting their point of view on the same topic. This task is required of both English and ESL designated students. (Students are eligible for classification as ESL students if they have lived in Australia for less than seven years and have had less than seven years' English language instruction).

The task requires students to develop a number of complex language skills, including for Part A, the ability to synthesise others' points of view, analyse the language and way in which the views are presented and interpret levels of meaning in a range of texts found in the media.

Part B demands that students do all of the above in reverse, as it were, in creating their own persuasive text. The communicative skills required to complete the task competently are transferable to the demands of other fields of study, other arenas for learning (at tertiary levels) and to a range of work place environments. CAT One was chosen for study, then, because of its salience to VCE and beyond. It was also chosen for analysis as it generates a consistent text-type (persuasive presentation of a point of view almost invariably leads students into arguments) as a common element on which to build comparisons between performance of English and ESL students.

The final important piece of contextual information is that the research is based on the work of Ulla Connor (1990) and Jim Martin (1985). It is inappropriate here to enter a discussion of methodology and details of the study, so a general summary of the findings and implications will be given.

Writing Arguments

Are there any differences in the way that English and ESL students structure argumentative writing?

This question was tackled by rating three elements of argument structure, that is, the claims made, the evidence or data given, and the warrants used to justify the claims. Warrants can be thought of as bridges between claims and data, or the fundamental basis or rules upon which claims themselves stand (Toulmin et al, 1984).

The argument structure considered was not to do with the organisation of the written text itself into theses and elaborations of points, but focused upon aspects of logic used.

Example of Toulmin's argument structure applied to a student text:

VCE ENGLISH 1991
CAT ONE: RESPONSE TO ISSUES
PART TWO: POINT OF VIEW

Contention: Is it advisable for Victoria to have casinos?

CLAIM	*The dangers of introducing legalised casino gambling into Victoria are real and threatening. There has been much public discussion and disagreement on this issue.*
DATA	*Previously, in the 82-3 recession, the Cain Government was strongly against casino gambling. Now the change in attitude has come about since additional gambling facilities are aimed at helping to reduce the state debt ($32.6 billion) – a staggering deficit.*
CLAIM (& sub-claim)	*However, the arguments presented in favour of casino gambling appear light-weight when compared with the arguments against it. The only valid point is the accruing of income to the government but that is a very minor sum when compared with the total Victorian debt.*

DATA	***What are the real problems in offering increased gambling opportunities to Victoria? Certain dangers have been listed by prominent citizens of Victoria, as for example Mr Xavier Connor – a retired Federal Court Judge – who has warned that the casino will attract organised crime with all the accompanying corrupt activities, such as sexual exploitation, stand over tactics and all the other associated illegal activities.***
CLAIM	*The likelihood of the crime rate rising as a result of casino gambling is very real and the government cannot guarantee a crime-free casino.*

Further examples to clarify these definitions are:

CLAIM	*Duck shooting should be banned.*
DATA	*Ten protected species were killed.*
WARRANT	*All life (including ducks!) is precious.*

There was no pattern to the occurrence of these elements of argument across whole texts or even within paragraphs. So claims occurred with associated subclaims at the beginning, middles and ends of paragraphs. Warrants were not frequently used by either the English or ESL students.

To give an idea of what these elements of claim, data and warrant looked like in the students' texts, a brief extract of one is given here. It is necessarily taken out of context; the paragraphing is the student's work.

CLAIM	*...Western countries are refusing to take direct action in their support for Lithuania. They fear the implications from Russia.*
WARRANT	*This shows that it is a widely held view that any country should have a right to lead a lifestyle they choose...*

By rating each element from one to three, then totalling that, each of 20 student texts was scored on its argument structure. As samples, the texts were representative of VCE grades A to E. [Editorial note: Grades from A to E are pass grades; unsatisfactory work is UG (Ungraded).]

The results indicate that the English and ESL students, while comparable in the B to E grades, scored quite differently on argument structure in the uppermost grade. The English As scored more highly than the ESL As, and the range of scores for the English texts (69 to 19) was wider then for the ESL texts (47 to 6).

This suggests that the very competent English students' arguments are more coherent and cohesive structurally than the very competent ESL students' arguments. The greater range for the English students implies more in-group diversity in structural aspects of their arguments and that the structural features may discriminate more strongly between English-speaking students than for the ESL students as a group.

A clear linear relationship was indicated for both groups between the VCE grade and the rating for **argument structure. This is both predictable and encouraging for teachers because of the pedagogic implications. If argument structure is so closely linked to VCE grade then clear direction can be given to students in teaching the writing and dealing with student drafts.** Advice could be given about omitting, including, or strengthening aspects of argument structure without the need:

- to provide a formulaic paragraphing sequence or
- to intervene beyond what is allowable for work to be genuinely produced by the student.

These have been problematic points particularly for teachers of those ESL students who have required ongoing support through the writing process.

Work modelling elements of argument structure and exercises highlighting and focusing on these elements would be appropriate in dealing with Part A of the task as well as giving students insights for their own writing in Part B. Rather than a recipe approach, students could develop an understanding of the elements of argument available in English. The logic of a text could be coherently linked to the structural elements. This would ensure that the writing matched the purpose (to persuade).

A clear example where this does not happen occurs in a 1990 ESL sample. The first paragraph consists of three sets of data – a graph, a report and statistics – so the purpose triggered for a reader is *description* of the situation. The need for a close match between text purpose and text structure is easily taught through positive examples (modelling, writing group texts) and through negative examples (mismatched purposes and texts, critical reading exercises).

Dealing with Audience

How do ESL students in comparison with English students persuade their audience?

Appeals to an audience based on credibility have been shown as significant in persuasive pieces written by English speakers (Connor 1990). This is commonsense – to be persuaded an audience/reader needs to feel that the writer is authoritative and believable at least. It is also an area that draws upon cultural understandings about the readers and what they *want* to read in relation to information and opinions on a specific issue.

In Connor's study, she rated 150 compositions for effectiveness of three types of appeals. These were:

- rational appeals based on quasi-logical structure, argumentation by example, illustration models, analogy and metaphor;
- affective appeals based around emotive language use, vivid images and metaphors;
- credibility appeals (defined below).

The statistical analysis Connor carried out indicated that only credibility appeals were significantly correlated with highly-rated essays, 'In other words, good essays contained the writer's own personal experiences, a good knowledge of the subject, and an awareness of the audience's values' (Connor 1990: 83).

To investigate this aspect of the sample credibility, appeals only were then rated, again using a scale from zero to three for both the English and ESL groups. These appeals were defined as appeals functioning through the writer's personal knowledge and experiences of the issue and awareness of audience values. For example: *I have experienced times while doing my VCE this year where I've been very overloaded with work requirements.* A further example of a credibility appeal would be in the second paragraph of the sample above discussing the advisability of casinos in Victoria, where the writer attempts to build his/her own credibility by referring to *prominent citizens of Victoria.* This qualifies as a credibility appeal on the grounds that it refers to reading on the topic (indicating knowledge over and above general knowledge) and also constructs and implies an audience value (respect of opinion of legal professional).

So for a rating of three an appeal would need to show 'Strong writer credibility (personal experience) and sensitivity to audience's values (specific audience for solution)' (Connor 1990: 77).

For both English and ESL groups, it was difficult at times to decide when an appeal was founded on their credibility. In particular, the 'audience values' part of the definition was largely ignored as 'audience' was too amorphous a concept in regard to these texts.

One text, for instance, appealed to the reader's humanity in relation to duck shooting by stating ... *we do not have the instinct to kill or feel the urge to get blood on our hands...* The appeal to the audience values is quite clear and unambiguous. However, the appeal behind *Have you ever ... taken a look at the destruction such activities as duck shooting have wrought upon the world and society?* is harder to pinpoint in terms of the writer's demonstrated experience in the area, knowledge of the issue or the audience values being targeted.

Across the two years considered (1990 and 1991) there was no clear pattern of use of these appeals. However for 1991 (a better sample because it was chosen from a larger pool of texts than the total 1990 pool) the results were as follows:

For English A to E: 9, 6, 4, 1, 0
For ESL A to E: 8, 4, 0, 0, 0

It would appear that the more highly graded texts for both English and ESL students use credibility appeals effectively, while the C grades down for ESL do not use them at all.

More work would need to be done to clarify the interpretation of these results. It seems a reasonable assumption that the less confident English language users may not have the language skills to use such sophisticated devices as credibility appeals. It may also be that these students feel culturally too distant to formulate appeals based on audience values, and writer knowledge and experience.

For teachers, demonstration of such appeals in other texts would develop the language resources needed to use them and would also *validate* their use as acceptable in English persuasive texts.

The issue of dealing with audience links back, of course, to text structure and purpose. A text that triggers 'description' instead of 'persuasion' for a reader is already struggling for credibility if the reader happens to be an assessor with a list of criteria beside her. It is here that teachers can assist students in developing the impact that their writing can have. 'Audience' should be struck out of most teachers' vocabulary and called for what it is – 'people'. The *concept* of audience needs both greater definition and to be enlivened. One place to start would be to take the understanding of reading as an interactive process and apply it to the teaching of writing. Student-writers need to do conversational – style negotiation in their heads, to anticipate and manipulate how the reader will travel through the text. Writing for an audience is more about relationship with the reader than a performance for an audience. (The references to Swales and Flower elaborate this for those interested in pursuing the idea.)

The two texts that are written for CAT One provide a great opportunity to expand students' understandings of writing relationships, and to avoid dull reiterations of others' arguments (their tone and language used) or of their own.

Exploring Style Through Syntax

How do English and ESL students write arguments, i.e. what language resources do they use and need?

Although it may sound extremely boring to analyse syntax, this aspect of grammar is crucial in understanding the language resources available and necessary for ESL students in completing CAT One and tasks comparable to it.

The implied question is what syntax is used to create the persuasive style, for English or ESL students. The organising idea here was drawn from Jim Martin's work on texts in *Factual Writing* (1985). Martin describes two styles of text that try to persuade as *analytical* and *hortatory*. Each style is characterised by the frequent occurrence of particular grammatical features. While some are countable, like passives, the lexical density and references, other aspects of the syntax add to the overall qualitative picture of the text, like the expression of attitude in the text, the use of statements as against questions and suggestions. Analytical texts defined in this way attempt to establish objectivity through the removal of human agents (e.g. by use of passives) and the changing of actions into things (e.g. experiential metaphors including nominalisation). This text you are reading is typically analytic in style with the author presenting the study at a clear distance from the 'I did this and I think it means ...' recounting style. That would be more hortatory, like old-fashioned politicians on a soap-box with lots of references to the person or people concerned, with direct action attributed to the subjects, with rhetorical questions and with intensification through repetitive phrases and clauses in sentence structures. (The last sentence being an example).

A full list of the syntactic features either counted or considered by frequency or extent in the texts is given here with examples as they appeared in the sample texts:

References (to roles, names, 1st or 3rd person)

> *Most of the retailer also support the mall because they think...*

Verbs (perceiving, thinking, feeling, saying)

... Therefore, in my opinion, I think...

Statements vs Questions/Suggestions

... Ancle, can you believe that ministers implanted a piece plan that will stop the crisis ...

Expressing Attitude

... helping to reduce the State debt ($52.6 billion) – a staggering deficit.

Experiential Metaphor

The shortages of skilled workers are of particular concern to the ***manufacturing industry*** *because* ***expansion*** *is vital for the* ***nation's growth***.

Intensification

These people hunted for survival, they killed for food and they killed only what they needed, they did not kill rather slaughter for the joy or fun of it, they weren't out to prove a point.

Certainty and Necessity

It is obvious that blocking supply is not an appropriate action.

Passives (self-explanatory, so no example given)

Through this syntactic analysis the texts could then be classified as either analytic in style or hortatory. Somewhat predictably six of the English students' text were analytic and three hortatory, with one of those three (an E grade) moving into some middle ground between the extremes that the styles could represent. For the ESL texts, eight were predominantly hortatory in style and two analytic. Again two hortatory (an A and a C grade) were not *strongly* distinguished as hortatory style.

Knowing that hortatory texts are closer to spoken language and are more context-situated than analytic texts makes these results not unexpected. The analytic style is more abstract and the grammar more difficult to manipulate. ESL students in the sample as a group have chosen a style of argument consistent with the language resources available to them. The overwhelming choice of English speakers for the analytic style indicates perhaps a greater exposure to and experience of these types of English texts and perhaps a level of comfort with the analytic stance when arguing a point of view.

For teachers the idea of argument style gives another way in to explaining the media texts examined in Part A of CAT One. Many students note the difference between hortatory and analytic texts and name the difference as subjectivity versus objectivity, where the latter is being held up as more prestigious, more valued and more accurate in representing some truth or reality.

Leaving aside the differential valuing issue, judgments about subjectivity and objectivity are a step removed from the language of the text. A language analysis focusing on *style* could draw upon the use of the syntactic features listed above. For Part B, students' own writing could be enhanced by an awareness of these tricks of the trade. It is not suggested at all that teachers return to instruction in constructing passives, but that in exercises around and discussion of samples, models or drafts awareness of how the syntax is worked out in a style may be helpful to students facing writing problems like 'How do I give my opinion without saying "I think?"' (Year 11 History student).

An important implication of the hortatory – analytic split along ESL – English lines is reflected in the spread of grades between these styles. In both styles (and groups) the pattern was quite random – there were hortatory As and Es, analytic As and Ds. This gives an important insight into the working of the criteria for allocating grades. Clearly the criteria do not discriminate on the basis of style, and that is a very positive outcome, because the two student groups seem to prefer different styles.

Conclusion

The analysis was completed along three dimensions – elements of argument structure, how the texts appeal to their audience and the syntactic elements contributing to style. As a detailed case study, some important points of comparison have been noted between English and ESL students' response to a task. Although there were clear differences between each group's response along all three dimensions, the most marked was in the aspects of style. Here, while English students opted consistently for an abstract approach, ESL students worked more often with the situated, more spoken style. As style is based in use of syntactic features it is at once easily observable and readily taught. Practical implications of the results of this study have been suggested within the discussion but the usefulness of such a case study lies equally within the basic information about ESL students' response to the task. To have a detailed description of ESL students' response provides an articulation of many teachers' intuitions about their students' writing and a validation of strategies old ('Ah that's *why* that works') and new ('I should try this because ...').

It is hoped that the discussion of the structure and organisation of these texts, their purpose and salient language features illuminates the teaching and develops the coherence of the teaching of the task within its assessment context.

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Appendix

Extract from the assessment sheet for awarding grades in CAT ONE

CRITERIA FOR THE AWARD OF GRADES

	High	Med	Low	Not Shown
1 Thought and content (the quality of thinking demonstrated in the work)				
• understanding the demands of both parts of the task	☐	☐	☐	☐
• knowledge and control of the chosen complexity of the ideas and issues explored in the work	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Structure and organisation (the quality of the structure developed by the student in response to the specified task)				
• the shape and cohesion of the work	☐	☐	☐	☐
• the sequence and coherence of the work	☐	☐	☐	☐
• striking or imaginative organisation of the material	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Expression, style and mechanics (the quality of the language used in organising and communicating the issues and ideas presented)				
• the expressiveness and fluency of the work	☐	☐	☐	☐
• the effectiveness and appropriateness of the language chosen, given the task	☐	☐	☐	☐
• striking or imaginative use of language	☐	☐	☐	☐
• control of the mechanics of the English language to support meaning	☐	☐	☐	☐

Grade descriptions

TYPICAL FEATURES FOR EACH GRADE LEVEL
CAT 1: PRESENTATION OF AN ISSUE – ESL

Note: These are general statements for each grade and may not correspond exactly to the performance of an individual student allocated the grade.

A Identified and discussed the relevant major aspects of the issue. Presented a commentary on the language used in the presentation of material. Demonstrated some understanding of the wider implications of the issue. Expressed an informed point of view and argued coherently and convincingly. Used relevant supporting evidence appropriately.

B Identified and discussed major aspects of the issue. Discussed the way in which the issue was presented. Expressed an informed point of view logically and coherently. Used supporting evidence appropriately.

C Identified some important aspects of the issue. Attempted some discussion of the way in which the issue was presented. Presented an opinion about the issue with supporting evidence. Showed sufficient control of the grammatical conventions and organisation of material to convey a coherent response to the issue.

D Identified some aspects of the issue. Presented a point of view with some supporting evidence. Demonstrated some control of language and organisation of material.

E Identified some aspects of the issue. Presented an opinion about the issue. Demonstrated some control of language.

Cloze — What Does It Really Tell Us?

Kieran O'Loughlin offers an evaluation of the commonly used cloze procedure as an assessment tool in language testing. His main conclusion is to reinforce the view, still often unheeded, that cloze is of limited use for assessment, and should be used with care.

Introduction

There are good reasons that cloze tests are so popular in language testing. They are easy to construct and can be 'objectively' and rapidly scored if the exact word scoring procedure is used. They are frequently used as one component of a placement test battery.

The question of validity, however, is one that needs careful consideration before the procedure is adopted for assessment purposes. This was highlighted for me recently in my own workplace when I asked those colleagues most concerned with the placement of students why they used the cloze as a part of their testing procedures. One claimed it gave a good measurement of reading ability (even that it was possible to derive ASLPR ratings in reading proficiency from cloze scores), another used it as a test of grammatical and lexical knowledge and a third was unsure of what, in fact, it tested at all!

Background

How ***cloze*** *got its name*

The term *cloze* was coined by W.L. Taylor in the 1950s. The word is derived from what Gestalt psychologists called 'closure' which for them was a process related to the perception of incompleteness, for example in geometric figures. Taylor considered words deleted from prose to present a special kind of closure problem — hence the term *cloze*.

Normally, and in this paper, the term *cloze procedure* refers to the pseudo-random deletion procedure whereby every nth word (usually 5th, 6th or 7th word) is deleted from a written text of ideally some 350 words or so in length.

The cloze procedure was widely popularised in language learning and testing by John Oller (1979) in the 1970s. For him cloze and dictation tests were examples of 'integrative' tests which, as opposed to 'discrete-point' tests, required a learner to use a combination of macro-skills and grammar (including phonology, syntax and vocabulary), the various aspects of which he considered could not be isolated. Integrative tests, in other words, were better because they came closer to the demands of authentic language use. Oller's views require some slight elaboration.

Oller (1979) argued that the *key* element in language proficiency was the ability to predict. He described this ability as the learner's 'pragmatic expectancy grammar'. This included, without adequately describing, grammatical, functional and strategic competence. This point will be considered later.

If pragmatic expectancy grammar or the ability to predict is *the* crucial component of language proficiency then it follows that a test which captures this ability to predict will provide an accurate measure of general language proficiency, and this was essentially the claim that Oller made for the cloze test.

The cloze test as a measure of language proficiency

A major problem with his view was that he appeared to equate *all* of the following terms: the learner's control of the grammatical system; language ability; pragmatic expectancy grammar; and cognitive network of language. As a definition of language proficiency this appears to be narrow and vague at the same time. Language 'ability' (presumably another word for 'proficiency') here becomes synonymous with pragmatic expectancy grammar. Such an entirely psycholinguistic, unidimensional view of language is difficult to accept.

Firstly, the sociolinguistic dimensions of language use which are central to Hymes' (1972) notion of communicative competence are ignored. It has been pointed out (Farhady 1983:257) that

> cloze and dictation tests ... do not assess the examinees' communicative ability. These tests do not effectively tap the sociocultural, sociolinguistic, or communicative performance of the learners.

Secondly, Oller's model of language proficiency gives too much importance to the notion of predictive competence. Predictive competence, according to this model, appears to include strategic competence as a sub-element. However, strategic competence has been more recently described by Bachman (1990:107-108) as making best use of *all* available resources, including linguistic, sociocultural and background knowledge as well as cognitive ability, to communicate in any given situation. Strategic competence in Bachman's model, then, involves cognitive factors other than language ability, making it the central concept to which other components of communicative language ability relate. Predictive competence may be seen as a *part* of both language and strategic competence (in Bachman's terms) but it appears untenable to suggest that it is *the* central element in language proficiency as a whole.

Oller's view of language proficiency, then, appears to be most inadequate. Although, in the face of strong and persistent criticism, Oller later (1983) rejected this theory of a 'unitary competence', he did not abandon the concept of 'expectancy' as an important component of language proficiency. Cloze tests may tap the ability to predict but this skill is clearly only one aspect of language proficiency.

The cloze test as a measure of reading comprehension

Two further claims have also been made by Oller about cloze tests:

(1)A more modest claim in certain respects is that cloze tests are good devices for assessing reading comprehension.

(2)He claims that the cloze procedure tests processing at the discourse, or whole text level: he considers that a learner would find it hard to fill in the blanks

> of a cloze correctly without being able to fit the meaning of the text into a larger context.

Alderson (1983) challenged these claims. He demonstrated convincingly that the cloze is largely *sentence-bound* as a test and therefore that it measures only a small part of what is involved in the reading process:

> ...as a test the cloze is largely confined to the immediate environment of a blank. The fact that the procedure does not delete phrases or clauses must limit its capacity to test more than the immediate environment, since individual words do not usually carry textual cohesion and discourse coherence (with the obvious exception of cohesive devices like anaphora, lexical repetition and logical connectors). (Alderson 1983:211)

Thus, in attempting to complete a cloze passage the reader is rarely operating at the discourse level, the level of the whole text. Alderson concludes, quite rightly then, that the cloze test relates more to tests of 'lower order' skills such as syntax and lexis at the sentence level rather than to tests of overall reading comprehension or of 'higher order' skills such as inference and deduction. (Alderson 1983:210-211). In other words, cloze generally measures the same skills as discrete-point tests of grammar and vocabulary. This may explain why Oller found such strong correlations between cloze scores and multiple choice reading comprehension tests, especially if the multiple choice questions were focused on sentence level syntax and vocabulary.

Alderson (1983) also showed, unsurprisingly, perhaps, that cloze tests are extremely sensitive to three elements: the type of text used, the scoring procedure and the deletion rate, with different tests giving markedly and unpredictably different results.

In other words, different cloze tests may well measure different things and therefore the procedure is not an automatically valid one. He concludes that each test must be validated in its own right and modified accordingly. However, in order to do this, he suggests it may be necessary to abandon the principle of deleting words at random in favour of:

> the rational selection of deletions based upon a theory of the nature of language and language processing. (Alderson 1983:211)

The cloze test : a recent study

Despite consistent and strong criticism over the last decade or so (from others as well as Alderson) the cloze test is still touted as a valid and reliable measure of language proficiency in some testing circles. In a recent study by Laesch and van Kleeck (1987), which focuses on criteria for assessing children on exit from bilingual education programmes in the United States, the cloze test is hailed as an accurate measuring instrument of academic language proficiency.

Laesch and van Kleeck argue that currently used language proficiency tests lack the ability to predict academic success in that they fail to distinguish between what Cummins (1979) called Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Cummins put forward the view that CALP is highly related to academic achievement. According to Laesch and van Kleeck (1987:172) CALP involves the ability to deal with decontextualised language that can only be interpreted with reference to itself with little support from the context.

This decontextualised use of language is contrasted with the kind of proficiency required for interpersonal situations where language occurs in a meaningful context (BICS). If the child has not developed CALP-level language skills then s/he will be unable to succeed in an academic setting such as the school. Hence the need to find a testing instrument which measures CALP as opposed to BICS. The writers argue that discrete-point tests, in focusing on separate components of language, are not capable of measuring CALP. Only integrative tests, such as the cloze, are valid CALP tests.

The distinction between CALP and BICS made by Laesch and van Kleeck in relation to appropriate testing procedures is poorly conceived and warrants comment. There seems to be a quite misleading assumption in this study that CALP, but not necessarily BICS, involves the integration of 'semantic, syntactic and discourse features' (Laesch and van Kleeck 1987:173). They imply that CALP, but not necessarily BICS, therefore, should be measured by an integrative test. This is untenable: all language use requires this integration and therefore integrative tests are as valid for BICS as they are for CALP.

Laesch and van Kleeck claim that the 'higher order' skills required to complete a cloze test are central to the development of CALP, although they do concede that the cloze test may not measure all aspects of CALP.

Analysis of their study, however tends to support Alderson's argument, referred to above, that cloze tests mostly only measure 'lower order' skills of knowledge of syntactic and lexical rules. The finding that higher scoring subjects in this study made more 'semantic' and 'global' errors does not necessarily imply that they were 'less bound to the decoding of grammar' and focusing more on 'the search for meaning'. It is highly questionable, therefore, whether cloze tests really measure CALP, as defined by Laesch and van Kleeck, at all.

In reality, the validity of the cloze test as a measure of CALP has not been established in this study.

The cloze test as a valid assessment tool

To return to my colleagues mentioned at the beginning of this article, the preceding discussion would suggest that, in general, the second opinion, that it was a good test of grammatical and lexical knowledge, is the most correct. Even taking this position is problematic, however, as different cloze tests often yield very different results and could therefore be measuring very different things as previously suggested.

Each test produced by the cloze procedure really needs to be validated in its own right and modified if appropriate. Yet in order to do this the 'pseudo-random' procedure would need to replaced by a rational selection of deletions based upon what is known about language, about difficulty in a text, about the way language works in a particular text as well as what aspects of language need to be tested. Adopting the selective deletion procedure would also enable the cloze to be used as diagnostic and achievement tests of particular syntactic and lexical knowledge included in a learning programme.

Conclusion

The appropriate uses of the cloze procedure are clearly much narrower than previously thought by Oller and his supporters. It certainly does not measure general language proficiency and, generally speaking, only tests a small part of what is involved in the reading process – especially short-range grammatical constraints. Given the prevalence of cloze, and the various beliefs about its ability to act as an assessment tool, this seems an important conclusion, with implications for many teachers.

It is important, however, to recognise the place of the cloze test in the recent history of language testing. In retrospect, it can be seen to represent a first attempt in second language testing to use an assessment tool based on a synthetic approach which involved learners doing something at least resembling authentic language use. As such, its rise and subsequent popularity reflected the major shift away from the psychometric – structuralist period which advocated an analytic view of language and language learning and the widespread use of discrete-point tests. The use of the cloze procedure during the 1970s, therefore, heralded the entry of language testing into the psycholinguistic – sociolinguistic period in which language proficiency has come to be defined in relation to communicative competence or communicative language ability. This is the paradigm which continues to shape thinking about language testing to-day.

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PracTESOL

Language Assessments in Preschool Settings

Priscilla M. Clarke describes best practice in helping staff to know young NESB children better and in assessing their language repertoires in their family and early childhood centre context.

There are now many children of non-English speaking background (NESB) in child care and preschool services who are learning English as a second language.

Until recently, there has been little information available on how very young children learn English as a second language and what types of programs should be provided. Also, there have been too few early childhood advisors with specialised knowledge and experience who could assist staff with the development of appropriate programs.

Misconceptions

A number of negative, incorrect attitudes about children with English as their second language appear to be prevalent among people who work in early childhood centres. These include:

- Children who cannot speak English have language delay.
- Children who refuse to speak English are called 'elective mutes'.
- Children who cannot speak English cannot speak.
- Children should be able to speak a great deal of English after several weeks at a centre.
- Young children need to practise grammar and pronunciation in a formal way.
- Bilingualism is a disadvantage.
- Maintaining the first language prevents children from learning the second language.
- Non-English speaking background parents should speak English at home.
- Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) must be done by 'specialists'.
- Young children learning ESL must be isolated from the mainstream for special groups.
- Young children learning ESL just 'pick the language up'.
- Teaching ESL requires emphasis on drilling, repetition and correcting mistakes.

Such misconceptions undermine the right of all families to a program that reflects and responds to their particular cultural and linguistic needs.

Training

Institutions training early childhood professionals often do little to help dispel such myths. Few courses adequately prepare child care staff and teachers to understand and promote the linguistic skills needed by young children. Staff with little or no knowledge of English as a second language are now being confronted by young NESB children and are ill-prepared to assist them.

Help needed

People working in early childhood services frequently ask the early childhood consultants at the Multicultural Resource Centre (MRC) for help in assessing the English language needs of the NESB children in their care. They need help in identifying the stages of second language development and are concerned whether the children are making sufficient progress in the new language. Many feel that they have insufficient knowledge and experience, or inadequate resources to assist them.

Language Delay

Some of those working with young NESB children in early childhood centres confuse the learning of English as a second language with specific problems of language delay. Delayed language acquisition in young children may be caused by:

- physical or structural deficits (such as hearing loss);
- physiological or neurological impairments (such as cerebral palsy);
- mental retardation;
- emotional problems.

An otherwise normal healthy child whose language skills seem noticeably deficient for his or her age may be said to have delayed language.

Children learning English as a second language are not considered as language delayed unless other symptoms are present.

In the majority of cases referred to the MRC for assessment, the problem is due to causes other than the language of the child. These include:

- the attitudes held by staff towards the children and their family;
- the type of program offered at the centre;
- the lack of knowledge by staff of stages of English as a second language development.

How does a MRC language assessment work?

If people working in children's services are concerned about the level of language development of any children in their program, they can contact an early childhood consultant at the MRC to arrange a language assessment.

Prior to a visit by a MRC consultant to assess the child's language, the particular situation is discussed with the centre staff dealing with the child.

Information will be gathered about the child, the early childhood program and the home environment.

Information about the child will include: staff concerns about the child's lack of progress in English; the child's initial settling in at the centre; the child's use of English in conversation; the child's interaction in the program with other children and with staff; the child's response to joining in group activities; the ability of the child to follow instructions in English; the child's understanding of the routines of the day; the child's progress in other areas; and parental concerns.

Information relating to the environment of the early childhood centre will include: the structure of the program sessions; activities and materials available for children; opportunities for both teacher-directed and child-initiated play; opportunities for use of the child's first language; and opportunities for the child to take part in a range of appropriate activities.

Information relating to the child in the home environment will include: languages of the home; the child's use of the mother tongue; the child's level of first language development as assessed by the parents; length of time the child has been in Australia; other adults in the home; siblings; occupation of parents; settlement issues; developmental history of the child.

From this initial gathering of information, the early childhood team develops a profile of the child in both contexts: the home and the centre. In some cases, the gathering of this information, followed by opportunities for the people working at the centre to discuss the particular child's needs with the MRC team, may be a large part of all that is needed. Through the process, staff are provided with information and resources to support the English as a second language learning of children in early childhood programs.

In cases where more help is needed, the MRC will arrange a language assessment. The Early Childhood Languages Checklist has been developed in response to the large number of requests for language assessment received by the MRC. The Checklist is still being trialled and has not yet been published. It is designed to assist early childhood educators to determine the children's competence in both their first and their second language. The checklist is administered by an Early Childhood Consultant in collaboration with a Bilingual Worker who speaks the child's first language and the teacher/coordinator of the program.

The Early Childhood Languages Checklist is designed to be used either by a person with a qualification in teaching English as a second language, or by people who have taken part in training sessions on how to administer the checklist. It covers preverbal and nonverbal skills; listening skills; early stages of speech and later stages of speech. Particular cultural aspects of language, accent, pronunciation, and formal and informal uses of language are also noted by the Bilingual Workers. It is suggested that the checklist is administered several times in the year. A four point rating scale is used: good, fair, poor and not observed.

Visits to centres by MRC teams to conduct language assessments are arranged only in consultation with the parents of the child concerned and with the understanding that at least one parent, together with centre staff, will meet with the MRC consulting team at the conclusion of their visit. It is also very beneficial for parents to be able to talk to the bilingual MRC staff member in this situation.

After completion of the assessment in the first language and English, provision is made for referral for further assessment if necessary. However, in most cases this is not necessary and with additional support to the early childhood program the child develops adequate English as a second language.

It is important that all people working with young NESB children develop appropriate ways of observing and evaluating the progress of the children learning English as their second language. If regular records of children's progress in English as a second language are kept then a language assessment by MRC teams is often unnecessary.

Priscilla M. Clarke heads the Free Kindergarten Association Victoria Multicultural Resource Centre in Richmond, Melbourne. The FKA MRC recently published her guidebook for preschool staff, *English as a 2nd Language in Early Childhood*. She is currently writing a thesis based on intensive recording of the English as a second language development of four young children in a Richmond centre. ■

Procedures for Monitoring and Assessing ESL Development in the Primary Classroom

This article draws on material being prepared for publication by Elina Raso and Sarina Greco for the **About Teaching Languages** *professional development program for primary school teachers. These extracts from* **Unit Four: Monitoring and Assessing Language Development** *show a range of assessment procedures that are part of day to day teaching and learning in the mainstream classroom.*

Introduction

Teacher assessments about students' level of proficiency and the kind and degree of support that is needed for further learning should be based on information collected on a regular basis in the classroom, using a broad range of monitoring and assessment procedures. These procedures need to be applied in different learning activities across the curriculum and in a range of social contexts including individual and group activities.

When teachers rely heavily on a single procedure, for example, making anecdotal comments based on informal observations, the range and type of information that can be collected and then analysed is limited. Collecting evidence of learning through informal observations is only one of the ways teachers develop a picture of the students as language learners. This article will present a range of procedures available to teachers in carrying out assessment.

What do teachers do to monitor and assess language development?

What teachers do to collect comprehensive evidence about students' learning can be organised under three broad headings:

- Teachers **observe and record**
- Teachers **discuss and record**
- Teachers **collect and analyse students' products**.

The range of procedures teachers use for monitoring and assessing language development can be summarised as follows:

OBSERVE AND RECORD

- informal observations of students in different learning activities
- planned observations of students working on specific tasks
- group reading conferences
- group writing conferences
- cooperative cloze.

DISCUSS AND RECORD

- individual writing conference
- individual reading conference
- student self-assessment
- discussions with parents

COLLECT AND ANALYSE PRODUCTS

- analysing samples of work
- error analysis of written work
- error analysis of oral language
- individual cloze activities
- running records
- miscue analysis
- published tests e.g. TORCH

Observing and recording

Observations of students in the school setting can be informal and spontaneous; they can also be planned and focused. *Informal observations* include watching, listening and talking to students in different learning activities throughout the day. At these times teachers may record what students do, how they approach learning tasks, what they say and how they use language in their interactions.

Planned observations involve setting tasks, being clear about the linguistic and cognitive skills involved in completing the tasks, and focusing observations on the way specific individuals and groups demonstrate these particular skills.

Tasks suitable for planned observation include :

- reading a text / listening to a text and recalling the main events in sequence
- sequencing a set of pictures or sentences to construct a text
- ordering words to form a sentence

- pair activities in which students give and follow directions to complete a task
- representing information in graphic form

Other contexts for observing students include *group reading conferences, group writing conferences* and *cooperative cloze sessions*. These provide teachers with structured opportunities to record information about students' literacy development and language in the context of the classroom curriculum.

Discussing and recording

Procedures under this category include:

- discussions **with** students,
- discussions **about** the students with parents, caregivers and other teachers involved in the students' learning; and
- discussions **guiding** students to reflect and make judgments about their own learning.

Individual reading and writing conferences are included in this category. Quality questioning helps students demonstrate their present understandings about literacy. Recordings organised under clear headings will help teachers gather the kind of information that provides insight into the support students need for further development.

Collecting and analysing products

Collecting and analysing samples of work or products provides teachers with detailed information about students' language development in listening and understanding, talking, reading and writing.

Students' products may be analysed through procedures such as *error analysis of oral and written language, cloze activities, running records* and *miscue analysis*. These procedures help in the collection of ongoing *evidence* of students' development in relation to the classroom curriculum. They provide snapshots of students' developing proficiency at particular points in time.

Teacher-made tests involve students demonstrating their understanding of an aspect of the classroom curriculum. Teachers need to define clearly the specific information about students' learning that they wish to collect through a teacher-made test.

Published tests are mostly independent of the classroom curriculum. As a means of assessing students' developing language ability these represent of course only *one* source of information, based on single samples, which always should be supplemented by other samples from different times and contexts.

All procedures mentioned here relate to mainstream curriculum activities, most of which teachers will already be using in their day to day teaching and monitoring.

It is important to note that *checklists* and *anecdotal comments* are not assessment procedures in themselves; a checklist can provide a *guide* for observations or can be a *format* for summarising information. The procedure itself would be *making informal observations*.

In the same way, teaching activities such as *Read and Retell* or *sequencing pictures to reconstruct a storyline* are not in themselves assessment procedures; they can, however, provide information for *planned observations*.

Planned observation: An example of Read and Retell

The *Read and Retell* example which follows has been adapted to incorporate second language methodology to support ESL students in successful participation and learning. The second language teaching methodology aims to ensure that ESL students have opportunities to show their 'best' performance after sufficient opportunities with modelling and explicit teaching with a language focus.

The sequence of activities in this *Read and Retell* shows how the focus for monitoring and assessment changes throughout the sequence and how samples can be generated for analysis at different stages of this sequence.

Sample Activity: *Read and Retell*
adapted from Hazel Brown, Brian Cambourne

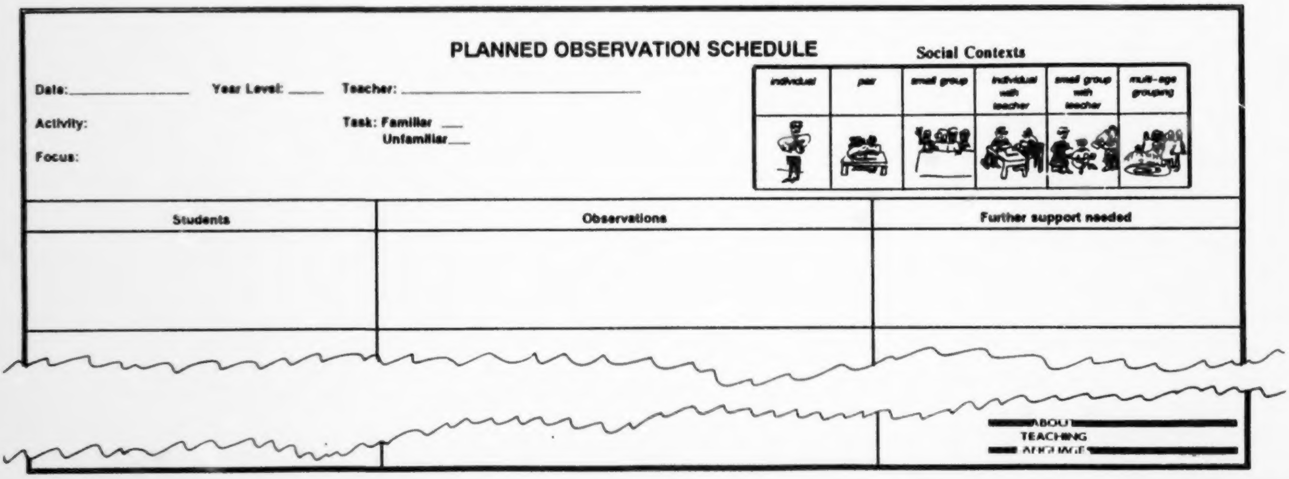
	Possible focus for monitoring and assessment
A. Predicting from the Title Students work in pairs, small groups jig-saw groups to predict and record: – main idea in text – possible words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) – possible phrases – genre i.e. narrative, expository text	• students' previous knowledge of the topic / concepts • students' understanding of the title • appropriateness of predictions
B. Sharing, Clarifying, Justifying Students work in pairs or small groups to share, clarify and justify their predictions	• use of appropriate language for clarification and justification
C. Collating Class Ideas (large group / small groups) Students work in groups to collate their responses The teacher collates group predictions under clear headings	• willingness to clarify and justify predictions • use of turn-taking strategies in small groups

D. Reading the Text The teacher reads the text to the students a number of times and guides discussion of the main ideas (Focus on meaning level) The students read the text in pairs and/or individually	• broad understanding of the text at a literal level
E. Discussing and Comparing – As a class – In groups } students compare the text with the predictions	• understanding of the text at a literal level • level of participation in discussion
F. Focusing on Structure Students work as a class or in specific need groups to focus on the structural organisation and linguistic features of the text	• understanding of the structural organisation of the text • understanding of language features at the sentence level
G. Providing Models Students work as a class or in small specific need groups, to orally retell the story using graphic supports: e.g. paragraph frames story maps	• use of appropriate language features at the text and sentence level when using graphic supports
H. Retelling (orally or in writing) Students work in – small groups – pairs and/or – individually } with or without teacher direction and support	• structural organisation of text (match between original and retelling) • cohesion of text
I. Sharing, Clarifying, Justifying Students work in pairs or small groups to share clarify and justify the written retelling	• reconstruction of main ideas • control of syntax, vocabulary and spelling The written retelling may also be collected as a **sample for analysis** • *Analysing Sample of Work* • *Error Analysis of Written Work* The written retelling may also form the basis for **discussing and recording during:** • *Individual Writing Conferences* • *Group Writing Conferences*

The recording format for ***planned observations*** shown below is designed to assist teachers in selecting a focus for observation. It includes the social context of the observation as well as the learning activity students are engaged in. It also includes space for noting the kind of further support and teaching required for these students.

The social context of learning

In monitoring and assessing students' language growth, teachers need to ensure that observations recorded and analysis of products include students working in different social contexts in activities across the curriculum.



PLANNED OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Date: ______ Year Level: ___ Teacher: ______

Activity:

Task: Familiar ___

Unfamiliar ___

Focus:

Social Contexts

individual	pair	small group	individual with teacher	small group with teacher	multi-age grouping

Students	Observations	Further support needed

ABOUT TEACHING LANGUAGE

The social context will determine the way students use language and the degree of support provided to individual students. For example, in small groups students use the language to explore and negotiate approaches to different activities collaboratively. The individual characteristics of participants that make up a task are also likely to affect student participation and performance in the activity.

When working independently students are asked to call on their personal linguistic repertoire and linguistic strategies in order to fulfil the demands of the activities. The teacher's presence or participation will change the group dynamics and will affect the kind and degree of support provided to individual students.

The following table shows some of the social contexts of students' learning in the mainstream classroom. The table encourages teachers to plot a range of observations across different learning activities matched with the social contexts students are engaged in.

This article has identified a range of assessment procedures which will form a comprehensive approach to teacher assessment of language development in the day to day teaching of a mainstream classroom and has included a few possible formats for recording ongoing assessments. These procedures are set out in detail in *Unit Four* of *About Teaching Languages*.

	Social Contexts					
	individual	*pair*	*small group*	*individual with teacher*	*small group with teacher*	*multi-age grouping*
Learning Contexts						

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Elina Raso has taught at Catholic primary schools as a general classroom, LOTE, ESL and New Arrivals teacher, and is a Teacher Advisor with the ESL Advisory team at the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne.

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The Importance of Wearing Different Hats on Different Occasions

Rosemary Senior presents an argument in favour of distancing process writing and formal assessment.

As no doubt many readers are aware, there can be no half-measures if a process approach to the teaching of writing is adopted. Drafting and redrafting of work is an integral part of the process. True learning takes place when students are struggling to find exact words to express precise ideas that they wish to communicate, on aspects of topics which they themselves have chosen and in which they therefore have a vested interest.

They must have time to play around with their writing: to work and rework introductions, to change the order of paragraphs, to make untidy crossings out, to add relevant examples to illustrate statements made, to strike out whole sections and to develop completely new ones. They must have time to make mistakes, and time to redeem those mistakes. They must feel comfortable and unthreatened.

What is the role of the tutor while this process is going on? Should it be the traditional role of omniscient teacher, judge and arbiter? In my view the answer is an emphatic 'no'. In the above scenario it would seem that the role of the tutor must be that of consultant and adviser; someone whom the students feel comfortable about approaching; someone who is going to offer constructive criticism rather than condemnation; a sympathetic friend, rather than an inflexible superior. Students must know that the weaknesses which they reveal will not be recorded and used later on as evidence of their inadequacies as writers.

Does it make sense for tutors to dish out marks for process written work (and justify the marks with hastily-written cryptic comments)? In my view the answer is again an unequivocal 'no'. Students gain a natural sense of satisfaction through having worked on their writing until they have produced a well-organised, coherent end-product in an acceptable academic genre. The extrinsic reward of a mark should not be necessary.

It may also be nonsensical, especially when the tutor herself, or another native English speaker, has extensively conferenced the student and has therefore had considerable input into the final product. An arbitrary mark may also have an unintended psychological impact, raising hopes or encouraging complacency if it is high, inducing lethargy or despondency if it is low.

In the writing workshop section of my course I assess my students' work in the following way. When handing in their final piece of work students must attach all previous drafts in numbered sequence, together with any brainstormed ideas, rough notes, mind maps and essay plans. From these I can judge the amount of work which has gone into the development of the finished product (and in my personal records I make a note of effort – but not of achievement). I then attach a blank comments sheet to the front of each student's process-written package.

When I write comments on my students' work I put on my warm fuzzy hat. I always begin with a brief personal response to some aspect of the *content* of what has been written. (Although I have often instinctively done this I am grateful to Marietta Elliott of Charles Sturt University for emphasising, during a recent process writing workshop, the psychological importance to any writer of receiving genuine, spontaneous reader feedback). I then normally give an encouraging comment on an aspect of the piece which has worked well, giving particular praise when the overall organisation of the piece of writing is clear and purposeful, with a line of argument which is coherent and which can be followed with ease. Finally I select an area where improvement can still be made and comment on it.

If specific errors at the sentence or word level are glaringly apparent I may suggest that the student does remedial exercises in the self access centre. However, the choice of whether to follow my suggestion is entirely up to each student: grammatical accuracy is a priority for some students, but I accept the fact that for others it may be a distant and unattainable goal, and time spent on trying to eradicate specific fossilised errors may be more profitably spent elsewhere (for instance, on developing the skill of overall essay planning).

From what I have said above it should be evident that I do not spend hours with my red pen defacing each student's finished product, meticulously correcting or angrily underlining every error at the sentence and word level. I find this activity time consuming and depressing, and suspect that it is often psychologically damaging to the writer – especially if the finished product has been painstakingly typed.

More significantly, current research is divided about whether the laborious correction of final products has a positive effect on the general level of student writing (Fathman & Whalley, 1990: 180).

Although I am a convert to the process approach to the teaching of writing I am equally aware of its limitations. I appreciate how demanding and time consuming it is, and I know that it is not suitable for all classes and all situations. I am also aware of the constraints imposed by institutions, which normally require the level of students' writing to be judged in a rigorous way against external criteria. In my particular case, for instance, my students have to achieve a minimum IELTS band 6 in writing if they are to be allowed to start their undergraduate courses.

The problem is that because I have used a process writing approach I now know my students intimately and appreciate the hard struggle that they are having to increase their writing proficiency. My perceptions are no doubt clouded by my sympathy for their predicament and I may well be too lenient in my attitude. My instinct is to keep on encouraging my students, to keep telling them that they are improving, when in fact their rate of progress may be extremely slow. Am I, therefore, a competent person to assess their writing level in a dispassionate way? And if I now tell them their writing is no good, will I not be betraying their trust?

Ideally an external assessor should judge the level of my students' writing, a person who does not know the students personally at all. Since this is impossible, I must adopt another strategy, which is where my other hat comes in. I have had to develop a dual personality, one for teaching and one for testing, and I know I must keep the two rigorously separate.

To give the students a realistic indication of their true level of writing proficiency I make them do a timed essay once every two weeks, under examination conditions. On these occasions I stride into the classroom purposefully, wearing my metaphorical mortar board, and woe betide anyone who does not detect my change in personality. I grimly collect up the scripts and mark them rigorously with a global impression mark, using an assessment similar to that provided by the IELTS band descriptors (to give more flexibility I have altered the scale, so that instead of using 9 bands, as in IELTS, I allocate marks out of 20, with 12 as the minimum pass mark).

The course coordinator cross-marks the scripts. The students are given their results on slips of paper, but their scripts are not returned. Everything is very formal and official, and I do not draw attention to the fact that I myself have marked the scripts.

Having struggled with the problem of how to reconcile process teaching, which naturally goes hand in hand with self-evaluation, with the necessity to use external evaluation criteria, I have come to the conclusion that the two areas are mutually exclusive. In other words, I have come to understand how vital it is to separate the practice of teaching from the practice of testing.

My advice to anyone who finds him/herself in a similar situation as myself is: be prepared to wear two different hats, but make sure that you do not attempt to wear both hats at once.

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Training Learners for Self-Assessment

Barbara Cram presents a model for confident planning of workable self-assessment activities.

We are all familiar with the practice of self-assessment. At one level, we periodically collect all our financial records, sort and order them, and 'self-assess' the size of our tax rebate or payment. At a more complex level, we regularly assess our performance as a teacher or as the leader of a workshop, reflecting on whether we have achieved what we set out to achieve, and considering ways of improving our performance.

Despite this familiarity, self-assessment in second language classrooms has not been approached with a high level of confidence. Teachers cannot readily access suitable material for learners, and they know little about the research done on learner attitudes towards self-assessment.

This paper will focus on three issues of interest to teachers considering self-assessment:

- the reasons for teacher and learner reluctance towards using self-assessment
- the benefits of implementing self-assessment
- a model for sequencing self-assessment activities.

Reasons for teacher and learner reluctance

The unwillingness of teachers to explore self-assessment generally stems from a combination of teacher reluctance and learner reluctance (see Figure 1).

Teachers, for example, may be concerned about giving up their role as language and assessment 'experts'. They may feel that the classroom atmosphere, which they have so carefully nurtured, will be jeopardised if learners resist the teacher's attempts to introduce a new form of assessment. Some teachers fear that learners will become self-critical and discouraged when they become introspective. Most reluctance stems from unfamiliarity with self-assessment exercises and activities and teachers' concerns about the accuracy of results that must be reported to supervisors and external authorities.

Untrained learners will also report a dislike of assessing themselves. Learners often misunderstand the purpose of assessment and underestimate the value of self-analysis in assessment. Many do not have the language skills to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate communication. In addition, dependent learners who are accustomed to teacher-driven assessment are not familiar with assessment standards or assessment methods.

Learners in an advanced course for professionals wrote recently about their initial views of self-assessment:

> *... I am not a professional in assessing and I do not know the (correct) levels to make an assessment.*
> *... Sometimes I am not objective in my assessment.*
> *... I cannot compare to (an)other person.*

These comments were made before the learners had received any training in self-assessment. Their views after undertaking a series of self- assessment activities are presented in the next section.

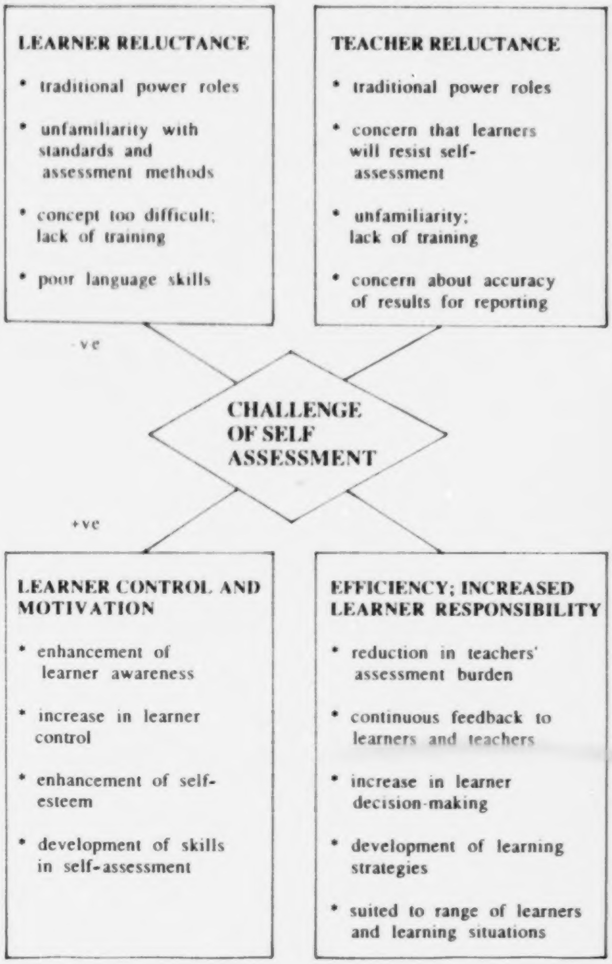
LEARNER RELUCTANCE
• traditional power roles
• unfamiliarity with standards and assessment methods
• concept too difficult; lack of training
• poor language skills
TEACHER RELUCTANCE
• traditional power roles
• concern that learners will resist self-assessment
• unfamiliarity; lack of training
• concern about accuracy of results for reporting
-ve
CHALLENGE OF SELF ASSESSMENT
+ve
LEARNER CONTROL AND MOTIVATION
• enhancement of learner awareness
• increase in learner control
• enhancement of self-esteem
• development of skills in self-assessment
EFFICIENCY; INCREASED LEARNER RESPONSIBILITY
• reduction in teachers' assessment burden
• continuous feedback to learners and teachers
• increase in learner decision-making
• development of learning strategies
• suited to range of learners and learning situations

Figure 1: Challenge of self-assessment

Benefits of self-assessment

Self-assessment, or assessment by *learners*, is integral to the philosophy and practice of 'learner-centred' teaching. Learners who set their own goals and determine their own learning pathways can gain even greater autonomy and control when they assess their own progress.

As a consequence of their involvement in monitoring their gains, learners develop an awareness of the skills and knowledge that they are required to achieve. With practice, they learn a great deal about themselves and are able to evaluate themselves realistically. Once learners are in control of what they learn and how they learn, they tend to be more motivated and to feel more confident about their achievements. They are then able to adapt their learning to meet changing conditions, and to ensure that they are following the path that will lead them to their goals.

Teachers also benefit from encouraging self-assessment. As learners develop strategies for monitoring their progress, they are able to take greater responsibility for assessment and for decision-making, thus leaving the teacher free to attend to other concerns. Furthermore self-assessment provides continuous feedback to teachers and learners and plays an important part in program evaluation. Since self-assessment is suited to a range of learners and learning situations, exercises developed for in-class use in one program can also be adapted to other programs.

Immigrants of professional background from the class quoted earlier described the advantages of self-assessment at the end of an eight-week program:

> *... It helps you to find your weaknesses, and to think about them by finding sources or asking from teachers.*
> *... It forced me to think (in) more detail about what I can do and how well I can use my competencies and qualifications generally.*
> *... Nobody knows much better than ourselves our gains and difficulties.*
> *... I'm not sure that I can assess my own gains properly, but sometimes it's helpful to have (an) outside look at yourself and understand what you have already done and what level you have approached.*

A model for sequencing self-assessment activities

If we acknowledge that self-assessment is beneficial to both teachers and learners, but that it is often resisted by both, the challenge is to develop a workable model for introducing self-assessment into learning programs. Such a model must first define the *role* of self-assessment in the program by addressing such questions as:

- What is the purpose of assessment?
- What types and levels of achievement will be assessed?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What are the characteristics of the learners?
- What constraints are imposed by the assessment environment?
- What is the role of self-assessment in the range of assessment procedures used?
- What are the training requirements?

(Cram, forthcoming)

Secondly, the model must guide teachers in the *implementation* of self-assessment. One possibility, trialled at NCELTR during 1992, is to follow a sequential program of self-assessment activities ordered according to the degree of difficulty of what learners are required to do. The activities begin with awareness-raising exercises in which learners practise describing their current skills, knowledge and attitudes to learning. This leads to group problem-solving, with learners recording and perhaps reporting on results. Later exercises involve more complex problem solving and the quantitative analysis of rating scales.

The exercises at each stage reflect Kohonen's (1992) description of experiential learning, where 'simple everyday experience' is regarded as useful but not sufficient for learning. Experience must also be observed and analysed consciously. Where possible, the observation and analysis are undertaken in a positive and supportive environment. To enhance learner analysis of their experiences, self-assessment activities and other class exercises are kept in portfolios. The portfolios are 'owned' by learners and can be periodically reviewed and analysed for achievements in areas of skill, knowledge and/or attitudes.

In this model, self-assessment is regarded as part of a range of assessment procedures. While self-assessment data may replace some of the data previously collected by teachers, its introduction is designed to benefit learners and the learning process. The degree to which portfolio data remains 'private' or 'public' – and is thus available or not for end-of-course assessment – would be determined by teachers and learners in each program.

Self-assessment activities

The recommended sequence of self-assessment activities is described below:

1. Exercises which raise learner awareness:
   - learners reflect on a problem they are having –
     e.g. What I find hardest when I talk to Australian people.
   - learners share their feelings with a colleague.

   These discussions are informal. While they focus on a problem rather than on a strength (since learners generally find it easier to identify a problem), the emphasis is on peer support and building confidence in expressing one's ideas and feelings.
2. Exercises which increase learner awareness through offering options:
   - learners answer a Yes/No questionnaire –
     e.g. At home, I like to learn by watching TV in English Yes / No (Willing 1989:22)

     This stage can be extended so that learners begin to make quantitative decisions:
   - learners complete a questionnaire with a numbered rating scale –
     e.g. I feel confident when speaking to my child's teacher (circle)
     a little *very much*
     1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. Exercises in which learners share assessment decisions with others:
   - group problem solving, with results discussed and recorded –
     e.g. discussion of a scenario from a cross-cultural video.
4. Exercises which encourage reflection on achievements:
   - learner diary; reflection sheets –
     e.g. Today I spoke to: ____________________
     One thing I said well today: ____________________
     (Nunan and Burton 1989:33)
5. Exercises which encourage the development of learning strategies:
   - discussing 'fears' and how they hinder progress; group discussion and strategy planning for overcoming fears –
     e.g. Why am I afraid of using the telephone?
     What can I do to overcome this fear?

Self-assessment activity	Enjoyed doing most Rank	Most useful Rank	Most accurate Rank
Discussing problem with another person	1	4	2
Completing Yes/No questionnaire	4	5	4
Completing questionnaire with 3+ choices	3	2	3
Reflection sheet	4	2	4
Indicating 'fears' on a graph	6	5	7
Simple rating scale	6	5	4
Detailed rating scale	2	1	1

Table 1. Learners' reactions to self-assessment activities

6. Exercises which help learners assess their performance both inside and outside the classroom:
    - group development of a skills profile for giving a seminar.
    - development of a rating scale for attending an interview (see Clarkson and Jensen 1992)
7. Exercises which involve making judgments on an externally-produced rating scale:
    - ASLPR rating scale; competency-based rating scales *e.g. ASLPR Self-assessment Rating Scale* (Wylie, reproduced in Brindley 1989); *Self-rating scale* (Achara, reproduced in Oskarsson 1984)
8. Reflection on achievements made during the course:
    - analysis of the portfolio; developing strategies for action after the class.

To summarise, early activities would consist of tasks that learners could already do. As exercises become more complex, training in new tasks would have to be given. In general, exercises would be relevant to learners' abilities and interests, and would always be presented in a positive manner.

Learners' reactions

The sequence of activities provides a framework for teachers introducing self-assessment, but it does not guarantee a successful program. Specific exercises would have to be prepared for each group of learners, and not all learners would be able to cope with all types of exercise. It is therefore recommended that teachers combine an action research program with the introduction of self-assessment.

For example, learners at the end of a learning program could be asked to review the exercises in their portfolio and to rank the activities according to:

a. those they enjoyed doing most

b. those they found most useful

c. those they considered to give the most accurate assessment of their abilities.

As an illustration, fourteen participants in an upper-intermediate level class at the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research were invited to review their self-assessment portfolios at the end of a program, and to indicate the exercises they had enjoyed most, found most useful and considered the most accurate.

The course participants were immigrants of professional backgrounds seeking work, and they had been undertaking self-assessment exercises for eight weeks. Their responses are summarised in Table 1; in each column, the exercise with the most responses (e.g. enjoyed doing most) is given a ranking of 1 and that with fewest responses is given a ranking of 7.

In this program, ten of the fourteen respondents enjoyed discussing problems with others, although they did not find this a particularly useful activity. Reflection sheets were considered to be enjoyable as well as useful.

Rating scales, especially those which were detailed and designed for this group of learners, rated highly in all areas. On the other hand, indicating 'fears' on a graph did not rate highly in any category, and this is an exercise which would have to be reviewed before the program is implemented again.

Conclusion

The implementation of self-assessment in second language classrooms presents a challenge to both teachers and learners. When the challenge is met, the benefits – particularly to learners – can be extensive.

This paper presents a model for introducing learners to self-assessment. The foundation for the model is set in place when teachers define the role of self-assessment in their program. The structure is provided in the form of a set of self-assessment activities for learners. These activities are arranged in a sequence which begins with awareness-raising exercises and familiar tasks and progresses through to rating scales which involve comparisons and value judgements. Exercises are kept in portfolios so that learners can regularly analyse their experiences. Finally, teachers are encouraged to undertake their own action research on the effectiveness of particular exercises and of the program as a whole.

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As coordinator of Educational Placement and Referral Services at NCELTR, Macquarie University, **Barbara Cram** is currently developing self-assessment tools for both course placement and the monitoring of on-course gains. ■

Drama, Roleplay and Assessment

Ben-Zion Weiss brings a creative touch to assessment to take account of the emotional dimension of language use.

Background

To use drama or roleplays as a form of assessment may at first seem odd. After all, aren't dramas and roleplays just a bit of fun? And isn't assessment something that's really serious?

As a drama specialist, I often feel that some teachers find it very hard to take drama and roleplays seriously. And if teachers don't take it seriously, clearly administrators and bureaucrats are hardly going to take any notice of it at all.

You might then be asking why I bother to pursue a creative, dramatic approach to education in an age of systems, computers, structural efficiency, cost recovery – an age where education itself has been reduced to training for employment. The simple answer is – that it works!

It works because it takes into account whole people interacting in real communication processes. And above all, drama tells you when it works, and when it doesn't – and that's where assessment comes into the picture.

Roleplay and Assessment

In a recent classroom exercise, which we also videoed, students were complaining about a used car they had bought. As the work of Gubay[1] shows, language is a source of power to people in a society and the process of complaining is probably one of the more difficult situations to handle, even for native speakers. Thus, the choice of the situation at the end of a unit on Buying a Used Car was largely dictated by the value of this language function to new migrants in dealing with Australian society.

However, while watching the video, it became clear that here was a way of not just empowering students, but also of assessing how well they had internalised the language and strategies involved in the situation, and how confident they were in applying them.

The language of the roleplay was entirely generated by the students in an improvisational situation, it could thus be used to determine how well the objectives of the whole language unit had been met, which is the very basis of Criterion-Referenced Assessment (Brindley 1989, Chapter 4).

Anatomy of a Roleplay

The roleplay involved two people, the buyer and the seller. The buyer wanted to complain about faults in the recently-purchased car and the seller was adamant that the there was nothing wrong with the car at the point of sale (Hayes 1984: 73).

The class itself was a General English, 20 hours per week, mixed On-Arrival and On-Going class of Oral Proficiency (ASLPR) 1.0 to 1.5. The unit of work was taken from Building Bridges, which is a series of extension exercises developed by teachers at Daceyville AMES and based on the dialogues of the Bridges Course.

The dialogue involved here is where Westy buys a used car for Bridget. So, the students involved had been exposed to the English language forms and strategies of buying and selling things in Australia for several classes and had hopefully acquired some of these skills as well as an understanding of the situation itself.

Coming at the end of all this, the roleplay lesson began with some warm-up[2] activities and then the students were given their roles on a piece of paper each – either as buyer or seller.

All the buyers then got together in small groups and likewise the sellers. Each group brainstormed the situation, what their role was and what kinds of things they would say.

The next stage was to put each buyer together with each seller and let them act out the situations, with all of them happening simultaneously. The third stage of the roleplay involved some of the pairs volunteering to perform the role play for the whole class.

As we had videoed the roleplays and the discussions of the role, we then watched the video and this led to the final stage of debriefing, which involved discussion of and feedback on the video process and the roleplay itself. The latter included some error analysis as an integral part of the discussion process; however a detailed error analysis would be the beginning of the next lesson.

Criterion-Referenced Assessment

What was very clear from each stage of the roleplay, that is, the discussion stage and the two performance stages, was how much English people had actually internalised from the series of classes on buying and selling, as well as how confident they now felt in using that language.

For example, specific lexis like parts of the car that were faulty were used by some students – like *brake* and *clutch*. Other faults like *rust* were found to be in exactly the same place as in the situation in the course material. Ideas like warranty and getting your money back, were either mentioned or implied, as was the awareness of bodies such as Consumer Affairs, where the complaint might be taken further.

Likewise the use of certain grammatical structures (for example, which students were correctly using the past tense) was also clearly evident from the roleplays, as were the use of connectors and syntax generally. Here the use of video or audio recording has particular value because the recordings can then be used to play back to the class and be analysed together.

In summary, then, the roleplay offered an opportunity both for criterion-referenced assessment of individual students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as providing an evaluation tool for the teacher of the degree of success of the unit of work itself.

Not only that, but different degrees of fluency were clearly evident from the level of stress of the situation – students quite fluent in the discussion phase could be literally lost for words during the performance in front of the group.

This highlighted how much the context could affect the level of language – a factor which teachers at the centre thought needed to be considered more in the general assessment process.

Self-Assessment

This approach, of placing a specific roleplay at the end of a unit of work, was also used with several other classes, at both higher and lower levels. In each case similar results were observed.

At the higher levels, after some discussions with the Assessment Project teachers and some teachers at the centre, we decided to add a further stage of self-assessment to the process. The self-assessment was itself designed to get students to consider what made a roleplay actually work as a communication process. This was also useful to allow the students to consider what kinds of things they might be learning in a roleplay, which to some students is a very novel way of learning.

Other Roleplay Situations

Some other examples of the use of roleplays like this were in the case of Intermediate Macro Skills focus class (around ASLPR level 2.5 to 3.0 Oral Proficiency, mixed On-Arrival and On-Going students) who were working on a thematic approach.

At the end of a week on the theme of Health, they performed a roleplay: Going to the Doctor. The roleplay had two parts: firstly, approaching the receptionist and getting access to the doctor, where the receptionist had to create an obstacle, such as 'the doctor is busy'; and secondly, the interview with the doctor, and the diagnosis.

Once again it was clear from the roleplay how much students had understood the language and strategies involved and how confident they were in their application in the simulation of a real situation.

In another case, in a unit on Starting a Conversation, the roleplay was extended to the world outside the classroom, which is its next logical stage. In this case students were encouraged to start a conversation with people on an excursion to The Rocks in Sydney.

This was either with people who were likely to be sympathetic or with people in shops or at information counters where they were given tasks to find out certain information. Similarly in a unit on Telephoning, the class roleplays were extended into hands-on use of the internal system of the centre, where students had tasks such as ringing each other up and inviting each other out. Other tasks involved ringing information services and asking for specific details.

Once again assessment is an integral part of the activity, for the teacher can tell by the degree of success in completion of the task how much English and how many telephone strategies the student has mastered. By using conference phones, the dialogue can be recorded easily and analysed with the class.

As the Curriculum Teacher at Daceyville, I felt very satisfied with the results of the application of drama techniques to language learning and assessment. I also feel very grateful to a number of teachers at the centre for their interest, expertise and willingness to cooperate in this project. Above all, the project has shown what can happen when teachers take drama seriously.

The use of drama and roleplays for criterion-referenced assessment – especially when combined with video and audio recordings – is a new direction that would seem to deserve more attention and exploration given the results so far and given the current climate of increased accountability for teachers. I welcome any feedback or comments on this paper.

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Notes

1. Although the Gubay roleplay technique is different from the one used here, there are certain similarities in the theory behind them – see Gubay 1980.
2. A typical warm up or starter might be *The Milling*, where students mill around the room to music, and when the music stops they have to find a partner and ask a question like 'What did you do last night?'.

References

Brindley, G 1989 *Assessing Achievement in the Learner-Centered Curriculum* NCELTR Sydney

Gubay, D 1980 *Role Play* Pathway Industrial Unit UK

Hayes, S K 1984 *Drama as a Second Language* National Extension College UK

Appendix

1. Learning from Role Plays

1. How do you know you've been understood?
   - a) Body language
     - Did you make eye contact? ☐ Yes ☐ No
     - Did you face each other? ☐ Yes ☐ No
     - Did you nod your head? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   - b) Answer
     - Did the answer carry on? ☐ Yes ☐ No
     - Did the answer repeat any words? ☐ Yes ☐ No
     - Did the other person say pardon or ask for clarification? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. How many people talked in your group?
   - a) Did anyone dominate the group? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   - b) Did everyone get a turn to speak? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   - c) Were there long silences? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. How confident did you feel when you spoke? ☐ Very ☐ OK ☐ Not at all
   - a) Did others seem confident? ☐ Yes ☐ No

     People show confidence by body language, risk taking and tone of voice.
4. Do you think your English improves through role plays? In what areas:
   - Speaking? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   - Listening? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   - Understanding? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   - Vocabulary? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   - Spoken Structures? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. What other situations would you like to explore through role plays?
   - a) Talking to teachers at your child's school?
   - b) Going to the doctor?
   - c) Interviews?
   - d) Complaining?
   - e) Other

2. Second-Hand Cars – Anastasia's class (after *Wheels and Deals*)

Customer

You have just bought a second-hand car from someone who advertised it in the local paper.

When you get it home you discover some serious faults. You paid $1500.

You go back to the owner to complain.

Car Owner

As far as you are concerned the car was all right when you sold it. You think it was worth $1500.

You have already spent the money so you can't give them a refund even if you wanted to.

3. Role Play with Jenny's Class

Going to the Doctor (A Role Play)

a) Set up the 3 characters in groups:

The Patient
The Receptionist
The Doctor

Warm up:

Mirror Exercise
What are you doing?

b) The Patient goes up to the Receptionist, who tells him/her that the doctor is out. The doctor will return in an hour. The patient has to decide whether to stay or go away and return.

Language Functions:

Greetings
Identification
Negotiating about time

c) The Patient sees the Doctor and explains his/her illness. The Doctor examines the Patient and prescribes some medicine.

Language Functions:

Greetings
Description of Illness/Interview
Prescription

Ben-Zion Weiss has studied and practised Drama extensively in educational, theatrical and community environments. He has a Masters Degree in Theatre Studies specialising in the application of improvisational drama to education. He has conducted a number of workshops for teachers in AMES in the use of Drama techniques in TESOL and is at present working as Curriculum Teacher at Daceyville AMES, New South Wales.

A version of this article has previously appeared in the proceedings of the ACTA Conference/7th ATESOL Sydney Summer School 1991, also entitled *TESOL in Context*. ■

TESOL Talk

A Language Record for New Arrivals

In this interview Pam McKenzie and Kris McDonald, New Arrivals teachers with the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne, talk about the **New Arrivals Language Record** *with Sarina Greco. After a trialing period last year all Victorian Catholic schools enrolling New Arrivals students eligible for assistance under the ESL New Arrivals Program are required to compile the record during the time students receive assistance under the Program.*

SG: Let's begin by looking at the first part of the record, Part A, which is the Student Profile. When is the Profile compiled and who collects this information?

PM: The New Arrivals Student Profile is usually filled in when the newly-arrived student enrolls in a school. It can be filled in by the Principal, the ESL teacher (if there is one), the classroom teacher or sometimes the secretary; it depends on the school's enrolment procedures.

SG: Can you summarise the information which builds the Student Profile, Pam?

PM: The first part is information that we need to verify the student's eligibility for New Arrivals assistance, so we look at the date of arrival of the student, the date of enrolment in the school, the country of birth, the date of birth of the student, whether they are migrant or refugee and if they have permanent resident status. We also need to have a copy of their immigration documents and passport.

Then we look at *cultural information* about the family, about their religious affiliation, the countries of birth of the parents, the countries in which the students have lived before coming to Australia, if applicable, and if there are any other students in the school or in the classroom who belong to the same cultural group. We also look at *linguistic background* and we ask for information that will help us to understand a little about the student's linguistic background, about the languages that they understand, the languages that the students are hearing daily in and outside the home and to whom they speak these different languages, in what social context.

After that we are interested in information about the student's *school experience* so that we can ascertain how much and what type of schooling they have had, the languages they have learnt, the languages they were taught in, any particular strengths that the student has and any particular needs or special interests. If we have any school reports we also include those in our documentation.

The last part of Part A is information about the *student's family*: whether or not they have been separated from other family members who are still in the original country, or if they are unaccompanied, or if they are staying with an aunt or uncle or cousins or grandparents or friends, the other siblings in the family. This is a comprehensive range of information that will help us to get an overview of the student.

SG: Pam, your work this year is mainly with schools enrolling significant numbers of students of LOTE background. Do you find that schools are well prepared to collect this kind of information?

PM: Yes, they are. Many schools have reviewed their enrolment procedures, especially as they relate to New Arrivals and now have a process in place whereby they can ascertain all the information the school needs when the parents enrol the students, not necessarily on the first day but in the first few weeks. They may arrange meetings where the parents come to school, or else I go out to the parents' homes and visit them, so that it is an informal and non-threatening way of eliciting all this information.

SG: Kris, your work has been often in schools with no ESL specialist, schools which may not be very experienced in working with newly arrived students or ESL students. How do you find they are able to cope with this kind of student profile?

KM: The Student Profile is good because it raises awareness within these schools, which often don't realise the value of the information that we want. I am usually the one who gets most of the information about eligibility for New Arrivals assistance from the Commonwealth. Then I sit down with the classroom teacher and organise an interview time with the parents, so straight away you are raising the awareness of the teacher about the importance of getting this background information and how important it is for the child settling in, and for accountability to the government.

SG: What are some of the difficulties that schools may have had in collecting this kind of information in your experience, Pam or Kris?

KM: Schools experience some difficulty in organising interpreters for the original and the follow-up interview.

PM: Some schools that I have worked in have had to find a new way of enrolling students in the school: where in the past it may have been the secretary who is left to try and collate all this information now they have decided who is responsible for collecting and collating all this extra information. Schools are also recognising the fact that interpreting is a very highly skilled area. Whereas in the past they may have used the students to do the interpreting, now they are realising that it is an area that requires a qualified interpreter.

SG: The other two parts of the record are summaries of progress at two points during the time in which the student is receiving ESL assistance. Can we talk about the kind of information that teachers are required to record about the student and how teachers go about making summary records ?

KM: I would like to comment first on the *Stages of English Learning* which are included in Part B. These summary statements are invaluable, because they put the teacher's mind at rest about the child's development in English. For example, if the child is saying nothing in English, then it helps them to see that this 'silent period' is a part of a stage that they are going to go through.

SG: The *Stages of English Learning* on the ***New Arrivals Language Record*** are taken from the work Hilary Hester and her colleagues did in the Centre for Language in Education in London. It might be possible in future to replace those *Stages of English Learning* with Australian work on ESL development and ESL profiles. Tell us about Parts B and C of the Record then. (See pages 38–39.)

KM: Part B is divided into three areas: *talking and listening, reading* and the third one *writing*. We ask the New Arrivals teacher, the classroom teacher, the ESL teacher or teachers who work with the New Arrivals student to comment on the student's development and use of language in each of these different areas. Having the *Stages of English Learning* in the New Arrivals Record provides a cameo of the child at each stage; it gets away from the idea of check lists. In the *talking and listening* section teachers comment on the student's development in use of spoken language in different social and curriculum contexts. It is important to talk about the learning context and the social context. We look at ways of collating information about these areas and then at how we can interpret that in the Record. The layout of the Record reminds teachers that these are important things to keep in mind when making assessments about student development.

SG: Can you explain what you mean by the different social contexts and learning contexts?

KM: We need to observe students in a range of learning activities as well as in informal social interaction. I have often gone to a school where the teacher has been elated because the child has initiated interaction in English in the playground. Recording that helps us to look at the whole development of the child and not just the academic environment. As another example, teachers will often say 'the child doesn't speak to me but is interacting with other children'; often that happens before the child speaks to the teacher. We are encouraging people to keep anecdotal records so that when they look back they can see important stages in the child's development. Keeping in mind the social contexts builds on the idea that students' language behaviour will be different depending on the context that they are in, in more formal or less formal situations and so on.

SG: Kris and Pam, I am interested to hear you talking about not using check lists so much as using anecdotal records as well as other records to compile the summaries. What kind of ongoing records are teachers using to help them compile a summary record?

PM: I encourage teachers to use a diary and to write down anecdotal records to keep track of what the students are doing inside the classroom, outside the classroom, in different learning contexts, in different social contexts, and note the particular language that they are using. It is a diary that the class teachers write in; I also write in it, and other teachers who are working with the teacher have access to the diary as well. It is an ongoing record and it is good to be able to refer back to it, so we can see that the child is progressing in the language.

KM: Some teachers I work with are also using a Diary of Observation. I encourage them to look at different learning and social situations.

SG: Can we look at an example of what a teacher might write under reading behaviour, what a summary of reading might look like?

KM: This is a new arrival who is in prep. (See sample on page 39.)

SG: Kris, who would see that, apart from the teachers who write it?

KM: Definitely the parents, because on our form we ask the parents to sign the record following a discussion on the child's progress. That was an important consideration in the design of the whole record. It was designed as a non-threatening document: not a list of questions, but rather featuring open-ended spaces, so that we could write comments and the parents would have access to it and were able to comment on it. We also have a section where the child is able to comment on his or her progress.

SG: What has been the students' response to the section that asks them to reflect on their own learning and progress?

KM: I have a prep student, and I thought, how do you get a prep to comment on this? But when I asked him, he said 'I know more English than Dad. My English better than Dad.' He thought this was terrific; I think the child was acknowledging that he came to school without any English, and now he realises that he is learning English. That reflection is an important part of their learning. In a record of discussion with parents, one father

CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE MELBOURNE

PART B – SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

Part B and Part C are summary records of the student's language and literacy development during the time the student is receiving assistance under the ESL New Arrivals Program. A Summary of Progress should be made at two points during this time by the New Arrivals teacher in collaboration with the classroom teacher – after six weeks and at the end of New Arrivals assistance.

The scales below will help your judgements. You may also wish to include comments on such aspects as confidence, strategies the student uses for communicating (gesture, use of first language, drawing on support of friends), knowledge of reading and writing in first language, as well as English or any other aspects important to you.

STAGES OF ENGLISH LEARNING

The following scales describe aspects of bilingual children's development through English which teachers might find helpful. It is important to remember that children may move into English in very individual ways, and that the experience for an older child will be different from that of a young child. The scales emphasise the social aspects of learning as well as the linguistic. Obviously attitudes in the school to children and the languages they speak will influence their confidence in using both their first and second languages.

STAGE 1: *new to English*

Makes contact with another child in the class. Joins in activities with other children, but may not speak. Uses non-verbal gestures to indicate meaning – particularly needs, likes and dislikes. Watches carefully what other children are doing, and often imitates them. Listens carefully and often 'echoes' words and phrases of other children and adults. Needs opportunities for listening to the sounds, rhythms and tunes of English through songs, rhymes, stories and conversations. If young may join in repetitive chorus of a story. Beginning to label objects in the classroom, and personal things. Beginning to put words together into holistic phrases (e.g. no come here, where find it, no eating that). May be involved in classroom learning activities in the first language with children who speak the same first language. May choose to use first language only in most contexts. May be willing to write in the first language (if she/he can), and if invited to. May be reticent with unknown adults. May be very aware of negative attitudes by peer group to the first language. May choose to move into English through story and reading, rather than speaking.

STAGE 2: *becoming familiar with English*

Growing confidence in using the English she/he is acquiring. Growing ability to move between the languages, and to hold conversations in English with peer groups. Simple holistic phrases may be combined or expanded to communicate new ideas. Beginning to sort out small details (e.g. 'he' and 'she' distinction) but more interested in communicating meaning than in 'correctness'. Increasing control of the English tense system in particular contexts, such as story-telling, reporting events and activities that she/he has been involved in, and from book language. Understands more English that she/he can use. Growing vocabulary for naming objects and events, and beginning to describe in more detail (e.g. colour, size, quantity) and use simple adverbs. Increasingly confident in taking part in activities with other children through English. Beginning to write simple stories, often modelled on those she/he has heard read aloud. Beginning to write simple accounts of activities she has been involved in, but may need support from adults and other children. Confident enough to substitute words from her/his first language if she/he needs to. Continuing to rely on support of her friends.

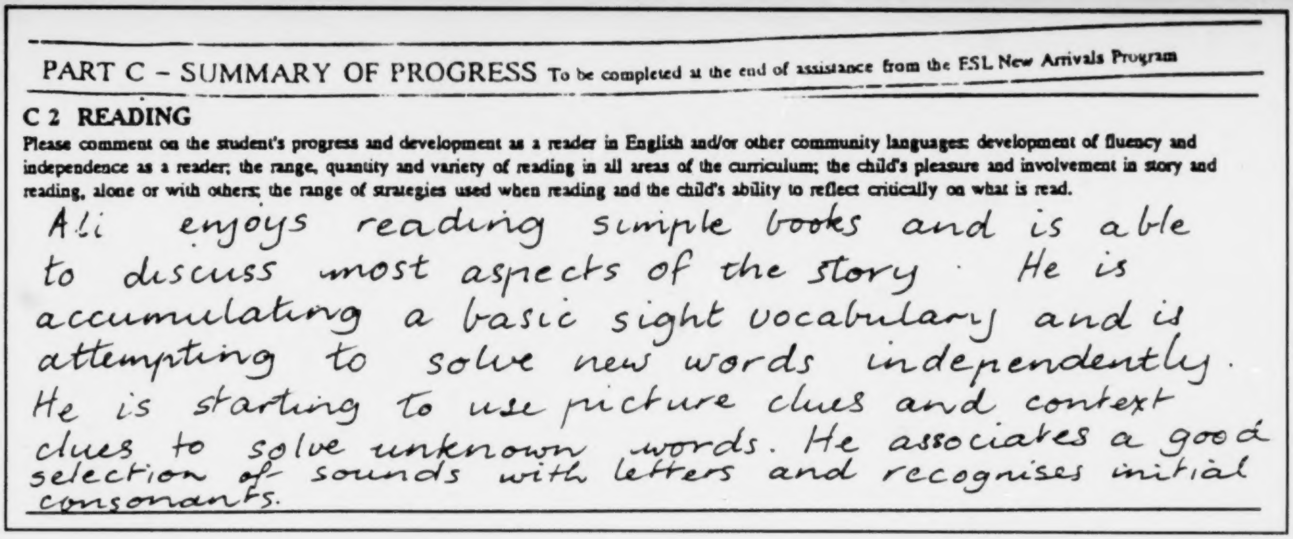
STAGE 3: *becoming confident as a user of English*

Shows great confidence in using English in most social situations. This confidence may mask the need for support in taking on other registers. (e.g. in science investigation, in historical research.) Growing command of the grammatical system of English – including complex verbal meanings (relationships of time, expressing tentativeness and subtle intention with might, could etc...) and more complex sentence structure. Developing an understanding of metaphor and pun. Pronunciation may be very native-speaker like, especially that of young children. Widening vocabulary from reading a story, poems and information books and from being involved in maths. and science investigations, and other curriculum areas. May choose to explore complex ideas (e.g. in drama/role play) in the first language with children who share the same first language.

STAGE 4: *a very fluent user of English in most social and learning contexts*

A very experienced user of English, and exceptionally fluent in many contexts. May continue to need support in understanding subtle nuances of metaphor, and in anglo-centric cultural content in poems and literature. Confident in exchanges and collaboration with English-speaking peers. Writing confidently in English with a growing competence over different genres. Continuing and new development in English drawn from own reading and books read aloud. New developments often revealed in own writing. Will move with ease between English and the first language depending on the contexts she/he finds herself in, what she/he judges appropriate, and the encouragement of the school.

In **'Patterns of Learning'** M Barrs, S Ellis, H Hester, A Thomas CLPE 1989 © **Hilary Hester.**



PART C – SUMMARY OF PROGRESS To be completed at the end of assistance from the ESL New Arrivals Program

C 2 READING

Please comment on the student's progress and development as a reader in English and/or other community languages: development of fluency and independence as a reader; the range, quantity and variety of reading in all areas of the curriculum; the child's pleasure and involvement in story and reading, alone or with others; the range of strategies used when reading and the child's ability to reflect critically on what is read.

Ali enjoys reading simple books and is able to discuss most aspects of the story. He is accumulating a basic sight vocabulary and is attempting to solve new words independently. He is starting to use picture clues and context clues to solve unknown words. He associates a good selection of sounds with letters and recognises initial consonants.

commented that he was pleased with his daughter's progress and how she comes home from school and excitedly relates all the things that have happened at school.

PM: Older students can be a little more reflective and where they have areas of weakness they will identify them. I have had children say to me: 'I need to ask more questions when I don't understand'; they sense that there is a need for them to have more input.

SG: The Record includes spaces for commenting on teaching that has helped or would have helped the student's language development and also for additional comments on the student's particular strengths.

PM: It may be clear that students are learning well in particular areas or have lots of experiences to talk about. Often it becomes very obvious that small group situations really foster learning and the student gets on well in them. Teachers can reflect on the sorts of things that have been successful with the student. Where there are areas that haven't been very successful they can change what they do, so that the student has more chance of success.

SG: How important do you think it is to work with the classroom teacher in compiling this record?

PM: One aspect of the *New Arrivals Language Record* that I enjoy is the fact that it is a collaborative document, that one teacher is not taking sole responsibility for the New Arrivals student. The classroom teacher doesn't feel as though she is on her own; the New Arrivals teacher can supplement what she is doing and the classroom teacher in turn can supplement what the New Arrivals teacher is doing.

SG: In general what has been the response of classroom teachers to the Record, given that many will find the experience of coping with a new arrival in their class quite new and very demanding?

KM: The Student Profile has had an impact. Teachers are probably amazed by the the experiences that the child has already had before coming to Australia. If they have had no experience with ESL children they find they could have lived in two or three countries before arriving in Australia, or they have interrupted schooling. The initial profile provides an important context for knowing the child and how to tap into experiences and be sensitive to them.

PM: With regard to the Diary of Observation, I think that teachers initially might baulk at the idea of keeping records of their student's progress, but when they do it and look back over the first few months and see how much the student has improved in their language development, not only does it make the teachers feel good about themselves but they can see success in what they are doing in the classroom. The *Language Record* is a summary, then, of what is in the Diary of Observation, and is really beneficial to them.

SG: Do you have any comments about how the idea of a formal record like this can be introduced?

KM: Some of the schools that I work in already have formal records for their students. When I am introducing it to a classroom teacher I usually take some time to sit down and talk with them. Practically speaking it may be the ESL teacher who releases the classroom teacher and gives us time to do this.

I usually make a point of introducing it to the Principal too, so that the Principal knows what sort of information we are gathering. It has a snowball effect, as often other teachers will pick up what is happening with the *New Arrivals Language Record* and they see aspects of it that they can use.

PM: I was asked at one school to speak to the whole staff about the Record even though there was only one newly arrived student in the school.

SG: At the moment the ***New Arrivals Language Record*** is only being used by classroom teachers who have New Arrivals students, so it is being used with a limited number of students. But it seems to have important implications for record keeping generally. The ESL Development Project, for example, is interested in adapting the ***New Arrivals Language Record*** for wider use with ESL students. Can you see its applicability to students beyond New Arrivals in the initial stages?

PM: I can see that it is a good way of documenting evidence on ESL students in the classroom. The thing that appeals to me is that by recording our observations we have documentation to back up the Record. We look back to our Diary of Observation so that the comments that we making are real.

Because we summarise progress in Part B after six months, we can reflect upon the way we have been teaching. Without ongoing records we probably couldn't write the summary comments on the Record.

SG: Let's sum up then. Is there a general statement you would like to make about the ***New Arrivals Language Record*** and its use in schools?

PM: I find it is the best document we have worked with. You can write open-ended comments which are based on your records but you are not locked into ticking boxes and writing a comment on one line and trying to slot a child into this.

KM: I like the collaborative emphasis in the document. A variety of people are involved in gathering information, collating the information and then summarising it onto the Record.

SG: Thank you, Kris, and thank you, Pam, for contributing to this discussion on the ***New Arrivals Language Record***.

■

TESOL Reviewer

Recent publications are available at no cost for review. Reviewers retain the books free for their personal use. If you are interested in reviewing books of your choice, contact the Book Review Editor.

Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing
Lyle Bachman
Oxford University Press, 1990
$57.50, 359 pp

Assessing Achievement in the Learner-Centred Curriculum
Geoff Brindley
National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, 1989
$17.95, 183 pp

Reviewed by Alan Williams, School of Education
LaTrobe University, Victoria

Assessment is an area of growing interest and relevance to TESOL teachers in all types of programs, both as funding bodies and Ministries of Education demand 'concrete' evidence that the programs they provide do achieve desired results, and as demand grows, there and elsewhere, for the assessment of learners' ESL proficiency in a widening range of educational and vocational contexts.

The former may lead to more narrowly defined outcomes for TESOL programs, or to ESL programs becoming more closely linked to either narrowly defined contributions to the economy or mainstream educational programs which are supposed to be economically productive; the latter may have much wider concerns, by no means all of which are detrimental.

Either way, a range of assessment devices – profiles, tests, interviews and the like – are likely to become more commonplace in TESOL circles than they have been. It is important that teachers are able to understand, debate and provide positive influence on the form that such assessments take, in the interests of their students and of their professional standing. If ESOL teachers fail to become literate in this field of endeavour or to learn to apply knowledge thus gained, we will not be in a position to influence the shape and form of the devices that are used, nor influence the way they are used, nor use them fairly or responsibly ourselves.

Bachman's comprehensive volume, *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*, is probably not the best place to start finding out more about this area, but it is valuable in providing an overview of central concepts and will be a valuable reference and resource in school, centre and departmental reference collections.

I found it intense reading and it required some concentration, and lots of time, to absorb the discussion of different perspectives, procedures and approaches to language testing, as well as the implications of the model Bachman is proposing. I suspect that unless you are enrolled in a course on assessment, or have special interest in the area, you are more likely to use it selectively to clarify and extend your understanding of specific aspects of language testing. A colleague of mine had to lead an in-service of some fellow teachers on assessment and found this book quite helpful in brushing up on some essential but complex issues.

Bachman has been working in language teaching and testing since the mid-60s (he is now Professor of Applied Linguistics at UCLA), and he writes with authority and depth of experience as he outlines basic concepts and presents his own models of what constitutes communicative language ability and how to test it.

The issues that he covers include measurement, the uses of language tests, communicative language ability, test methods, reliability, validation and some persistent problems and future directions. The model of communicative language ability that he proposes is based on a view of language competence that includes a number of aspects – grammatical competence, textual competence, illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence – each of which includes a number of components. It is an interesting view of what constitutes competence in a language, and this chapter would be of interest to those concerned with this area, even if they left the rest alone!

The model of testing that Bachman puts forward, termed an 'interaction / ability' approach and reflecting his view of the need to assess separately different components of language proficiency (grammatical, pragmatic and sociocultural), is contrasted with what he calls a 'real-life' approach (on which the ASLPR, for example, is based) that sees language proficiency as a more unitary phenomenon, in an interesting discussion in the final chapter. The discussion illustrates the distance we still have to go in unravelling the essence of this most basic of human capabilities.

In short, you will find this volume a useful resource if you want to deepen your understanding of almost anything to do with language testing. It is clearly indexed, and sub-headings in the text make specific sections or jargon easy to locate. Unless you have a particular interest or some background knowledge in testing you might like to start with something more basic first (see *TESOL Resources* in this issue), but this is nevertheless a very valuable and interesting work. It will certainly be a useful volume in your school or centre teacher reference section.

The second book, Brindley's *Assessing Achievement in the Learner-Centred Curriculum*, is the fifth title in an interesting research series produced by NCELTR. Like some of the other titles in the series, this book is based on a study of one area of assessment and evaluation in the Adult Migrant Education Program. The study in this case investigated ways of assessing learners' achievements, rather than the issue of their more general language proficiency.

In this context this volume is a handy resource. In essence it comprises: a discussion of some critical issues in assessment; a brief report of a survey taken of assessment procedures used by teachers and administrators in the AMEP and a brief presentation of a range of recent assessment devices emanating from a range of sources. It does not cover the entire territory, but what is covered is substantial, and the significant issues are described in a manner that makes this book easy to read and easy to consult as a reference.

Its focus is criterion-referenced forms of assessment of students' learning in relation to the objectives of a course. It is particularly useful in providing examples and brief descriptions of a selection of methods of assessment that have been developed in different parts of the world, including Australia, for a variety of language teaching programs. Here Brindley refers to broad views of what constitutes proficiency in a language (Bachman's model, see above) as well as presenting more specific examples of approaches to assessment such as progress profiles for students involved in courses of English for Nurses (developed by the City and Guilds of London Institute in 1986).

A range of interesting questions are discussed. Various approaches to profiling and student self-assessment are introduced, and ways of describing and recording both specific competencies (such as using the telephone) and broader skills (such as writing) are presented and discussed. The examples provided come from contexts in which both adults and children are taught, and from a range of types of program.

My only significant criticism of this book is its title, which could be misleading. The meaning of the term 'The Learner-Centred Curriculum' will not be clear to many potential readers, and the term as used in the title is not substantially discussed, nor its use justified, in the book. It seems to be an attempt to use a catchy slogan rather than provide an informative title.

This book will be a valuable resource for a teacher or group of teachers who are interested in improving the formal and informal means they use of assessing their students' progress. It will not be the only source they will want to consult, for it does not claim to provide a comprehensive discussion of the whole area of assessment. But it will provide stimulating ideas and possible starting points.

Like Bachman's book, it certainly belongs in teacher resource collections in schools and centres where teachers have a need to examine or an interest in thinking about the way they assess their students' progress.

Certificate in Advanced English Practice Tests: One

Patricia Aspinall and Louise Hashemi
Cambridge University Press 1991
Student's Book $14.95, 105pp
Teacher's Book $17.50, 96pp
Set of two cassettes $28

Reviewed by Jonathan Crichton, Cambridge Examiner and head teacher at Waratah Education Centre, NSW

First run in Australia in June 1992, the Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) is the latest EFL examination from the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. The CAE is a test of General English at advanced level and includes tasks which are relevant to communicative demands within a working environment.

It is aimed at learners who have already achieved a level of English equivalent to a grade C pass or above in the upper intermediate level Cambridge First Certificate Examination (FCE). CAE thus represents a welcome addition to the range of Cambridge EFL examinations by providing a bridge between FCE and the extremely advanced level Certificate of Proficiency Examinition (CPE). As a consequence, learners now have the opportunity to study for the advanced level CAE before deciding whether to continue on to CPE.

This is particularly good news for those learners who, for whatever reason, may be unlikely to achieve the standard required by CPE, and also for those planning to take CPE whose study would benefit en route from the incentives and skills accruing from study for the CAE.

CAE Practice Tests 1 consists of a Student's Book, Teacher's Book and a set of two cassettes. Four complete practice tests are included. As with FCE and CPE, each test includes five papers, four of which assess the macro-skills and a fifth which focuses on the appropriate use and control of structure and lexis. However, due to the emphasis in CAE on 'real-world tasks', the formats and tasks contained in the five CAE papers differ significantly from those employed in the FCE and CPE.

The CAE writing paper provides an example of this difference in emphasis. In the first of two compulsory tasks, no choice is provided: candidates are required to write in response to a substantial corpus of information designed to contextualise the task in terms of audience and purpose.

Thus, in the first practice test of *CAE Practice Tests 1*, the candidate is asked to write two letters pertaining to changes in the arrangements for a conference. Extensive background information is provided, including relevant details of the addressees, and copies of a memo, note and letter supposedly received by the candidate.

For the second writing task, candidates select one from a choice of four. In the first practice test, these include a reply to a job advertisement, a book review and a letter providing local information to a family participating in an exchange program. The tasks are contextualised using relevant written and graphical information, though this is less extensive than that provided for the first writing task.

The CAE writing paper thus differs from those of the FCE and CPE examinations, in which candidates are required to write two compositions from a choice of five topics. In topics where situational stimuli are employed, these lack the depth of contextual information relating to specific audiences and purposes provided in the CAE.

CAE Practice Tests 1 provides an excellent introduction to this new test for students and teachers alike. As with the other books in this series, the practice tests are clearly laid out and great care has been taken to replicate the look and feel of the real examination.

The interview practice sections illustrate this approach. These include high quality colour reproductions of photographic material and clear instructions for the four stages of the interview.

Materials selected for inclusion in the practice tests reflect the emphasis placed in CAE on authenticity and a task-based approach to assessment. Thus the five tests contain a wide range of authentic texts which should provide useful practice in the various modes of assessment employed in CAE.

The Teacher's Book includes an overview of the structure of the test, detailed instruction on the marking schemes used, as well as comprehensive information on the questions and assessment aims in each paper.

CAE Practice Tests 1 will be appreciated by CAE candidates and teachers alike for its high standard of presentation and materials selection. In addition, the extensive use of authentic tests and wide range of relevant and practical tasks may prove to be of considerable interest to teachers running advanced level courses for non-exam candidates.

Correction
M Bartram and R Walton
Language Teaching Publications 1991
$22.95, 122 pp

Reviewed by Peter Murphy, RMIT TAFE Sector, Victoria

What a refreshing book this is! Simple, clear and concise in its exposition. Laced with those gems of practical application that we practising teachers all relish.

Comprehensive in its treatment of a thorny topic (as Michael Lewis, LTP General Editor, says in his introduction, correcting is one of those areas where most people have strongly-held beliefs; things are black or white, never grey). Well considered and thought-out, *Correction* is wonderfully up-beat in its positive attitude to what is often thought about in negative terms.

Specifically written for ESL teachers (though of interest to a wider audience of teachers in general because of the principles it covers), the book is interactive in style: no less than eighty-nine tasks are set for the reader throughout the first nine chapters! No passive reception of knowledge here; the reader's active involvement in exploring both the topic and her own attitudes and practices is encouraged.

Chapters run in order from the theoretical through to the practical, covering such topics as: background theory, a definition of 'mistake', teacher and student behaviour, oral mistakes (discussion and management thereof), written mistakes (ditto), and remedial work. Also included are chapters on advice for teachers who are non-native speakers, and a set of correcting tasks [both at the sentence level and (short) compositional level].

I think we all acknowledge that lessons are sometimes best learnt by making mistakes. This attitude pervades the book. Mistakes are seen as evidence of learning, with teacher and student attitudes towards them crucial in maximising such learning. The language used by Bartram and Walton is indicative of the book's tone: 'mistake management', 'positive approach', 'three reasons for encouraging mistakes', 'self- and peer-correction', and so on.

I found it an exciting challenge reading *Correction*; the book is a warm and open invitation to assess and improve one's understanding and practice in an area of vital importance, for teacher and student alike.

Art on the Run: Visuals for Teachers of English as a Second Language

Peter Macer
Adult Migrant Education Education Services, Victoria 1989
$25 with folder, $20 without, 150 pp

Reviewed by Anne Thorp, St Paul's Primary School, Coburg, Victoria

As the title suggests, this resource provides Art on the Run. Unfortunately, I am not a budding artist, but I do recognise a short cut when I see it!

Art on the Run, as the introduction states, is a collection of graphics and visuals that are commonly used in the teaching of ESL and, for that matter, teaching generally.

An invaluable advantage is that permission has been given to reproduce this material for educational purposes. The graphics and visuals photocopy extremely well and can be enlarged or reduced to suit individual needs.

The manual is divided into eighteen sections. I have found practical material in all sections, especially symbols for layout, grids and crosswords, forms and people. The withdrawal and deposit slips were perfect for a recently-completed money theme, as they supported our Real Life Approach to Learning with minimal preparation.

The Everyday Signs and Symbols section is particularly valuable as the signs are exact reproductions and use Australian English, as distinct from British or American English. The signs included range from road signs such as *walk* and *don't walk*, to signs for public information such as male and female toilets and *no trespassing* to mathematical symbols.

The manual has saved me from the laborious task of drawing up grids. Class charts not only have become more decorative, but, more importantly, have attained greater meaning with the addition of clear visuals to indicate pair or group work, listening, writing or speaking activities, and so on.

A distinct advantage is having all the material housed in a folder. As the editor suggests, to avoid waste, unused photocopies can be stored in the folder. Six plastic sleeves are provided in the manual for this purpose.

Although *Art on the Run* provides a seemingly endless supply of material that can be reproduced or adapted, other resources can also be stored in the folder, so the manual has the potential to grow and grow.

The only minor drawback of the package is that the pages are not numbered, making it a little difficult to locate a particular item or return a page to its right place. This can be simply overcome by numbering the pages.

Overall, *Art on the Run* is an invaluable resource, a great addition to every teacher's box of tricks.

Aboriginal Pedagogy: Aboriginal Teachers Speak Out

B Wei, D Nayin, Y Rom, N Nginingawula, Ngawarranungurumagi
Deakin University Press 1991
$24, 179 pp

Reviewed by Lorna Lippmann, Victoria

As long as twenty years ago efforts to Aboriginalise schooling in traditional areas of the Northern Territory were being made, but they were unavailing. Half a day in the bush with one of the elders did not match up with four and a half days of standard fare taught by Balanda (white) teachers using totally different teaching strategies. And control of school management and curricula was totally in white hands.

This book documents the beginning of a real revolution in Aboriginal education, told by Yolngu (Aboriginal) teachers themselves who are struggling to be agents of change, to put into operation the aims of their respective communities and to impart to children an understanding of traditional values, history and beliefs of their own people.

More than a dozen Yolngu teachers tell of their aims and experiences in their respective community schools, which reveal a remarkable similarity in the events they have encountered. They were all students of the Deakin University-Batchelor College Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (D-BATE) which aimed to support teachers in their efforts to introduce pedagogies to back Aboriginal people's aims for self-determination, particularly in Arnhem Land communities.

The burning question to be resolved was whether 'both ways education' was a possibility. The teachers themselves has been socialised in a traditional community and then had had a European-style formal education.

Almost without exception these Aboriginal teachers reported resistance to innovation on the part of Balanda staff members when they saw Yolngu taking increasing responsibility for the running of their school. A thorough study of the theories of Freire assisted the Yolngu innovators.

They had become aware of the 'cultural oppression' under which they had lived and the fact that schools until recently had been perpetrators of assimilation and of the destruction of Aboriginal culture. *Aboriginal Pedagogy* relates how school councils had been rendered powerless by Balanda staff, who made all the decisions and used the councils like a toy telephone.

At one school the white principal, when approached by the council regarding innovations, retorted that only when school attendance was more regular would he consider the question of change! Yolngu teachers were only too well aware that attendance was erratic because much of the curriculum was irrelevant to the children's lives and was taught in a way which did not accord with the learning strategies of the community, where demonstration and emulation had always been used.

In each chapter the D-BATE graduate describes how she has set up an Action Group in her community, comprising Yolngu teachers, the local Aboriginal Council, clan leaders, parents and others. Meetings have been held in the local language and findings conveyed to Balanda staff by a fluent English speaker among the group. Enthusiasm for the Action Group has sometimes waxed and waned in a less than ideal fashion.

The Balanda explanation for this phenomenon: 'these people just don't care about the education of their children'. But the Yolngu know that key individuals in the community have many commitments besides the school: the Community Development Program, arrangement of sporting events, return to outstations and the holding of ceremonies. In between these many preoccupations, and as part of the Action Group, they assist in exploring curricula and deciding what is really to the advantage of their students.

The book demonstrates how there is a general feeling in the various traditional communities that the children should retain or have returned to them 'pride and confidence in their identity' and that adults should be given the opportunity to identify just exactly what comprise the 'things they want their children to have'.

Details of the various groups are outlined by each of the teacher-authors. Children are taken into the bush at regular intervals in their moiety groups and have ceremony, meaning of designs, local history, dance, literature and music demonstrated to them.

They are encouraged to use their own language on these bush walks and to continue using it at home. Natural objects are identified and collected for wood-carving or other use and humpies or shelters are built.

Time and again the Yolngu teachers (usually in a minority among the education staff) comment on Balanda reluctance to lose control of the school. They themselves have continually to struggle against being put down or ignored by their white counterparts.

They are aware that to shift the balance of power must be one of their principal aims, to return decision-making to the community. Until this is done in fact, any talk of self-determination as government policy for Aborigines remains unreal, as the Yolngu authors of this book realise only too well.

It is worth noting that almost every research project, commission of enquiry or writing of any kind on the subject of Aboriginal affairs comes to the same conclusion as does this book: until control over Aboriginal institutions and enterprises is firmly under the direction of Aboriginal communities their present parlous position will not change.

Additionally, *Aboriginal Pedagogy* has lessons for teachers and administrators of community schools of all kinds, not just Aboriginal, where staff are endeavouring to devolve responsibility on to students, parents and the surrounding community and are encountering pitfalls on the way.

Language Transfer: Cross-linguistic Influence in Language Learning
Terence Odlin
Cambridge University Press 1989
$25, 210 pp

Reviewed by Dr Helen Jenkins, Victoria

Some teachers are interested in looking only at techniques for the classroom, while others want also to know how learners learn, so that they can match teaching and materials with learning. Odlin's book will interest the latter. It will help if readers have some knowledge of linguistic terms and concepts, but a useful glossary is there to assist those who do not.

The material in this book is not new: Odlin's contribution is to bring together different points of view and weigh up the pros and cons of the universalist and language transfer positions on second language learning. The first three chapters provide an introduction and overview of the issues, both historical and theoretical.

A reader new to the topic will find the key names and ideas – Fries and Lado and contrastive analysis, Kaplan and contrastive rhetoric, Richards and error analysis, Greenberg's notions of universals, order typology, Krashen and others on the cognitive mechanisms of all language acquisition – and will be directed to these sources. One of the virtues of the book is the large number of studies cited. If you are about to study second language acquisition in an Applied Linguistics course, these three chapters will provide you with a succinct orientation.

Odlin is interested in the way in which transfer interacts with other factors in second langauge acquisition, although he admits that the relationships among the various factors are only partially understood. In chapters 4 to 7, he focuses on transfer in four linguistic subsystems: discourse, semantics, syntax and finally phonetics, phonology and writing systems.

In the discourse chapter, two sub-topics are selected because of their importance in the presentation of self, and thus in language teaching: politeness and coherence. Odlin gives examples comparing English with other languages, pointing out that even in two languages and cultures as closely related as English and German, the transfer of norms from one to the other can result in negative presentation of self. At the same time, he acknowledges that factors other than transfer can also be important.

In chapter 5, on semantics, Odlin again selects sub-topics. He dismisses Whorf's strong relativist position (put crudely, that how you think depends on your language), but is prepared to consider the weak position: that language may have an important although not absolute influence on cognition. The section on English and Chinese hypotheticals and counterfactuals, despite being inconclusive, is interesting.

In lexical semantics, of course similarities between the two languages make learning easier; Odlin's concern is with the role played by both transfer and universal processes such as overextension and approximation. Odlin also emphasises the importance of semantic cases (roles such as Agent and Patient) in comparisons between languages.

Chapter 6, syntax, treats three much-studied areas: word order, relative clauses and negation, and the details are of practical value to teachers. Odlin finds evidence of transfer in all three areas, but that other influences are also at work.

When we turn to the sound system in chapter 7, we are in the area where transfer of first language characteristics to the second language is most conspicuous and least controversial. The examples of different categories of transfer are useful to teachers. In writing, it is also an obvious advantage if the learner already knows the writing system.

Linguistic structure is not the only factor at work in transfer, however. Chapter 8 goes beyond the system-internal aspects of the preceding chapters to consider who the learners are and what their environment is. Individuals vary in personality, ability to mimic, language awareness and literacy. Environmental factors include such mundane things as class size. There is also some discussion of whether or not it is advantageous to learn a second language when very young. Certainly the young learner can be expected to develop a more native-like accent. One important suggestion in this chapter is that the importance of transfer in any situation varies according to social context.

Chapter 9 serves as a summing up. It looks at the limitations of transfer research, and despite the cautions, lists seven conclusions that suggest that transfer is a reality in second language acquisition. We still do not know just how important cross-linguistic influences are, and this is one of several areas in which research is needed.

Finally, chapter 10 deals with implications for teachers. This is done in rather general terms, such as the recommendation to aim for a speech and writing standard that will both minimise prejudice and be comprehensible. Teachers should also aim at some understanding of the place of both language transfer and universals in second language acquisition. This chapter, although expressly for teachers, is the least valuable section of the book.

ACTA: Australian Council of TESOL Associations
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TESOL Resources

Tom Lumley and Tony Ferguson have selected and annotated the following list of materials on assessment in TESOL.

If you know of any resources for either TESOL specialists or mainstream teachers of students who speak other languages, do send in the details: ***TESOL in Context*** would be pleased to list them in our Resources column.

Books and publications

1. Connell, Bob Ken Johnston and Viv White 1992 *Measuring Up: Assessment, Evaluation & Educational Disadvantage* Australian Curriculum Studies Association Canberra
   $12 members of ACSA, $15.95 non-members 84 pp

   This volume, which has just been released, is based on the results of a study carried out by the authors, commissioned initially by the Schools Council of the National Board of Employment, Education and Training. It arose in response to the renewed public interest in social justice and education, and an increasing administrative pressure for accountability of equity programs.

   'Micro-technologies of assessment can easily become micro-technocracies, where technique becomes self-justifying. We think it important that a principle of democratic control over knowledge should guide assessment thinking in disadvantaged schools, as notions of democratic control figure in DSP thinking about planning and decision-making'. (Connell et al, p. 58)

   Available from Australian Curriculum Studies Association, PO Box 884, Belconnen ACT 2616 Phone (06) 254 8538 Fax (06) 255 2072

2. *ESL Student Needs Assessment Procedures*, South Australian Education Department

   The *ESL Student Needs Assessment Procedures (SNAP)* draw on recent developments in systemic functional linguistics in order to provide teachers with a means of assessing and reporting on the English language needs of students from non-English speaking backgrounds in mainstream school contexts, from Reception to Year 12.

   Information obtained through the procedures can be used by teachers in:

   - modifying their programs to suit students' different learning needs
   - providing students with specific feedback about their progress
   - re-evaluating their own classroom practice and engaging in informed discussion with their peers about language and literacy learning issues
   - making decisions about students' progress for broader system level purposes

   The procedures contain an overview document outlining some of the relevant theoretical issues in relation to assessment as well as a description of the procedures and guidelines for their use. Detailed assessment proformas for a range of common oral and written classroom activities are included, together with descriptions and analyses of a range of sample written texts. A support document contains moderated samples of students' responses which illustrate how the assessment proformas may be used in analysing students' oral and written texts.

   Extensive trialing of the materials has shown them to be a valuable resource for assessing the language development needs of all students, not only those from non-English speaking backgrounds. The procedures have also been successfully applied to the New Arrivals Program context.

   For further information see Bouffler, C *Literacy Evaluation – Issues and Practicalities* June 1992 pp 41-52 Primary English Teaching Association Sydney $17 members $19 116 pp
   Information about the *ESL Student Needs Assessment Procedures* may be obtained by contacting:
   Lexie Mincham or Claire Reichstein, Languages and Mulicultural Unit, Robson Road, Hectorville, SA 5073 Phone 08 337 677 Fax 08 365 0571

3. Gibbons, Pauline 1991 *Learning to Learn in a Second Language* Primary English Teaching Association Sydney 122 pp

   Highly recommended. Includes suggestions for carrying out ongoing classroom assessment. Available from Primary English Teaching Association, Laura St, Newtown, NSW 2042 Phone (02) 565 1277 Fax (02) 565 1070
   $17 for PETA members, $19 for non-members

4. Gibbons P et al 1991 *Finding Out: a resource kit for teachers K-6 for assessing written and spoken language* (A Disadvantaged Schools Program Project) Catholic Education Office NSW 64 pp

   This is a very concise practical guide to ways of assessing reading and writing in the primary years. Teachers would need to remember to consider the child's L1 competence, in addition to merely concentrating on English, as this kit seems to do. It comes in six short sections, each presented in as straightforward a manner as possible, with plentiful diagrams and a minimum of text. Samples of formats teachers could use for teacher observation, or assessment of a range of different activities, in both reading and writing, are included. The material is presented in a loose leaf folder, for easy removal of appropriate pages.

Available from Catholic Education Office, Sydney 38-40 Renwick Street (PO Box 247), Leichhardt, NSW 2040 Phone (02) 569 6111 Fax (02) 550 0052

5. Gibbons, Pauline 1992 Identifying the Language Needs of Bilingual Learners in Derewianka B (ed.) *Language Assessment in Primary Classrooms* pp 283-297 Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Sydney $29.95

   One chapter in this new book edited by Beverly Derewianka is devoted to issues in language assessment particularly relevant to bilingual learners. In this brief survey, Pauline Gibbons discusses characteristics of the bilingual learner and their implications for assessment, before giving a few examples of how assessment may be carried out, using contextualised activities in the curriculum rather than clearly distinguished tests.

   The material is partly drawn from her earlier book *Learning to Learn in a Second Language* (see above).

6. Barrs, Myra, Sue Ellis, Hilary Hester & Anne Thomas 1988 *Primary Language Record: Handbook for teachers* Centre for Language in Primary Education London $20 64 pp

   Barrs, Myra, Sue Ellis, Hilary Hester & Anne Thomas 1990 *Patterns of Learning* Centre for Language in Primary Education London $20 48 pp

   For much fuller information about these resources, see the interview with Hilary Hester in ***TESOL Perspectives*** pp 6–10.

   The *Primary Language Record* has been adapted by the Catholic Education Office, Victoria, to produce the *New Arrivals Record*, used mainly in primary schools, and to a lesser extent in secondary schools. It will also form part of the basis for one suggested reporting format in the National ESL Development (ESL Profiles) project (see article, this issue pp 10–15). *Patterns of Learning*, the swansong of the Inner London Education Authority (before abolition by the Thatcher government) sets out to show how the National Curriculum in Britain could be implemented at primary level, and how teachers can use the *Primary Language Record* for record-keeping. It is very relevant to the Australian context, and full of practical ideas and examples for both teaching and assessment, and how they work together. Available from Mary Sepe, School of Education, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria 3083 Phone (03) 479 2298. Add $2 for postage to each order

7. Hughes, A 1989 *Testing for Language Teachers* Cambridge University Press Cambridge $25 172 pp

   This is a general introduction to the field of language testing, much less demanding, technical and comprehensive than Bachman's *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing* (see ***Reviews*** p 40), as one would expect in a book whose stated objective is 'to help language teachers write better tests'.

   It considers different types of tests, introduces and explains a number of essential concepts such as reliability, validity, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced testing, and gives attention to the process of test construction, with numerous examples of test materials in each of the four macro-skills.

   He aims to point out potential difficulties as well as present a range of techniques (not all of which are particularly modern or innovative), and tries to do the whole job in as accessible a style as possible.

8. Weir C J 1990 *Communicative Language Testing* Prentice-Hall International Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, UK $35.95, 216 pp

   This book is in two parts. The first part deals with how you should approach the task of designing a communicative language test, if that is your aim (with a bit of history, discussion of basic considerations, steps in test construction and methods for testing the four macro-skills), thus covering similar ground to the Hughes book above, but from a more academic (as well as more communicative) perspective.

   This is followed by a series of five appendices, with samples of well-known public tests used (mainly) in Britain over the last twenty years or so.

   These are mainly tests of English for Academic Purposes, including the IELTS test, and represent a useful reference work for those working in the fields of EFL/EAP and language testing.

9. Underhill, N 1987 *Testing Spoken Language: A handbook of oral testing techniques* Cambridge University Press Cambridge $22.50 128pp

   Designed for language teachers and other people interested in the use of tests of oral language ability.

10. Hamp-Lyons, Liz 1991 *Assessing Second Language Writing in Academic Contexts* Ablex Publishing Corporation Norwood New Jersey $84.70 352 pp

    A comprehensive presentation and consideration of a wide range of issues, particularly relating to selection, placement and implications for teaching of NESB tertiary students.

    Oriented towards the USA university/college system, but a good read. Useful introduction in which key terms in language testing are explained briefly but clearly. Judging by the price, this is one for your institution's library!

Assistance with publication details supplied by TESL Books, Melbourne (Phone 03 670 3532).

Organisations and networks

1. *The Free Kindergarten Association Multicultural Resource Centre* in Melbourne holds a collection of resources for kindergarten teachers and parents, including class materials; they also run inservice programs for preschool teachers and offer consultancy services to childcare and preschool providers. The MRC, directed by Priscilla Clarke, is in new premises at:

   1st Floor, 9-11 Stewart Street, Richmond 3121
   Phone (03) 428 3569

2. *TESL-L: the electronic discussion forum for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*

Communicate with your TESOL colleagues worldwide

TESL-L is an email (electronic mail) forum for worldwide communication with TESOL colleagues. When you type a message on your keyboard and send it to lists such as TESL-L, the message goes to a central computer which has a list of all the members and their electronic addresses, and which then sends your message to all these subscribers. When you turn your computer on and log into your mail account you find all the messages sent by subscribers waiting for you to read them. You can read the messages and reply to them if you wish. Thereafter you can delete them or save them to disk or print them out.

What's the point? Looking for teaching ideas on some language point or what textbooks teachers have found useful? Looking for articles on a TESOL matter? Looking for contacts to share rooms with at conferences? Want to see the international and local conference announcements and job postings? Want to know where students can register to do the TOEFL or IELTS test? Read TESL-L or ask the members. You'll get replies from teachers, administrators of language programs, teacher trainers and researchers all over the world. Within 24 hours or so their collective wisdom will be available to you.

You can just 'lurk', that is, read messages without posting any. And that in fact is what most newcomers do until they feel comfortable with the style and level of the discussion. Believe me, it ranges from the very mundane and good-humoured to some very heated discussions about the place of culture in testing and language teaching. If you want to see some past discussion, you can retrieve as one file all the messages for a particular month.

As more colleges and schools get online facilities, requests for email penpals for language learning are proliferating. Imagine setting up your class with a bunch of ESL learners in New York for a 3-week email session. You hardly need to encourage them to practise writing. The messages fly back and forth across the Pacific as students indulge in their curiosity about life elsewhere.

This is the way to stay in touch with the world and make professional friends. Email is beginning to replace conventional 'snail' mail. Even journals are now beginning to be published and distributed electronically by email rather than in paper format.

How much does it cost? Nothing, if your institution has email facilities that are linked to AARNET and thereby to Internet. If you don't like it you can easily unsubscribe. But try it now. Australian TESOL has several decades of valuable experience to share with the world and in the thrust to be more fully integrated with the Asia-Pacific region it is of paramount importance that you make our voice heard out there in what is virtually a university of the airwaves.

If you already have an email account, send an electronic message to:

Anthea Tillyer (ABTHC@CUNYVM.BITNET or
ABTHC@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU)
or Susan Simon (STSCC@CUNYVM.BITNET or
STSCC@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU)

If you run into trouble write to:

Anthea Tillyer
International English Language Institute of
Hunter College
695 Park Avenue (10 East) New York NY 10021
USA

Information supplied by **Anthea Tillyer** in New York and **Lloyd Holliday,** School of Education, LaTrobe University, Bundoora, Vic 3083. email: edulh@lure.latrobe.edu.au ■

TESOL Troubleshooter

If you have a problem or a solution regarding any of the issues faced daily in the classroom, please drop me a line. I have selected from our mailbag the following questions relating to assessment.

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

How do I assess and still continue to cater for the daily teaching and learning demands within my classroom?

Overworked, Vic.

Dear Overworked,

Integrating assessment into our daily classroom practice is an important and essential consideration if it is to be manageable. A good place to start is to reflect on what's already in place that will assist you with this.

Start by considering the teaching methods and approaches that you know to be effective and that you use successfully as part of your normal classroom practice. Language activities can be used as assessment gathering methods.

Select a language activity or teaching approach that you use; identify the language and learning demands of the activity and make a decision about which language and learning behaviours you wish to assess – this may be dependent on whether you want to identify student language needs, assess their language competency or both.

Consider whether the activity will enable you to stand back and take on an observing role within the classroom. You will need to organise for a 'planned observation time' within a particular unit of work and with a particular target group of students in mind.

Decide on a format that will enable you to effectively classroom. You will need to organise for a 'planned observation time' within a particular unit of work and with a particular target group of students in mind.

Decide on a format that will enable you to effectively record information about the language or learning strategies you have selected to assess.

At a later stage you will need to consider how the information might best be collated and stored.

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

I have been working as an ESL teacher in a small inner city primary school for a number of years. My role involves planning with teachers across the school and working collaboratively in the junior primary mainstream classrooms.

This year my main focus has been to slowly introduce and establish ongoing ways of assessing and recording aspects of students' language development in normal classroom activities.

My dilemma at the moment is working out how to best utilise all the information collected about students' needs when planning units of work with teachers. Do you have any suggestions?

Cry for Help, S.A.

Dear Cry for Help,

Monitoring and assessment has certainly been on the agenda to differing degrees in most schools this year.

Focusing on ways of collecting and recording information as your starting point with teachers was a wise move. Building ongoing procedures and recording strategies in a classroom ensures that teachers have comprehensive information for planning and for summarising and reporting student progress to parents and other teachers.

In response to your dilemma, first of all I suggest you ensure the information collected about individual students is kept manageable and easily accessible to all teachers working with a group of students.

Secondly, the format you use for recording your information should assist teachers to record observations and assessments of students in particular tasks. In addition to this, they should guide teachers to record suggestions for further teaching and support. In this way assessment and planning are taking place simultaneously.

The recordings made over time should allow you and the classroom teacher to identify emerging patterns of learner needs.

Look at your information and begin to identify whole class, specific group and individual needs of learners. Then plan a unit of work that addresses whole class needs within the mainstream curriculum.

Select and focus the curriculum content with the language focus related to the language needs you have identified for these learners. Now look at your specific group needs.

Plan a teaching cycle including input and modelling to meet the group's needs. These lessons should as much as possible be related to the overall unit of work, but they should not be driven by the curriculum.

Start slowly, have a go and let me know how effectively you have been able to apply these suggestions.

Dear Troubleshooter,

I am a classroom teacher with a significant number of ESL students in my classroom and I have high expectations of all my learners. I am trying to understand what makes assessing ESL students' language development different from assessing native speakers of English.

Shouldn't I expect them all to be achieving in the same way? Can you help me?

Confused, ACT

Dear Confused,

It is rather difficult to address such a complex issue in such a limited space, but let me attempt to touch on one or two differences. Firstly the long-term goals for native speakers of English and ESL students should be the same.

We want all our students to be competent users of English (in its spoken and written forms) in a broad range of social and academic contexts.

What is different is students' starting point in school learning and possibly their pathway on the road to competence. The second language learners in your classroom started school with knowledge of a language and culture other than English.

This experience provides a basis on which to build second language development. Any assessments made of learners' English language development will need to consider the content.

Many ESL students will be developing their oracy and literacy skills in English simultaneously while English-speaking background students will have added literacy after already establishing oracy skills in English.

ESL students will also be expected to develop knowledge and skills across curriculum areas through English, their second language. These students are then asked to provide evidence of their successful learning through written and spoken English, which they are still learning.

Any assessments of ESL learners need to consider that the knowledge displayed through English is not an indication of their total language competence.

In making observations about these students' learning, what we look for and record will need to be described in terms of what students can do in their second language and how they do it.

The NLLIA ESL Development: Language and Literacy in Schools Project is developing bandscales of ESL learners' developing competency in English, with accompanying sample materials and suggested procedures which will assist teachers in making assessments of ESL students' progress. (This issue pp 10–15.)

All these materials will be available soon. ■

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ACTA

Australian Council of TESOL Associations

MISSION STATEMENT

ACTA is the national coordinating body representing all teachers of English to speakers of other languages. It aims to promote and strengthen English whilst supporting and respecting people's linguistic and cultural heritage.

English is the language of public communication and the lingua franca for the many different sociocultural groups in Australia, as well as a major language of international commuication. For full and effective participation in education, society and in the international arena, competence in English is necessary.

TESOL is the teaching of English by specialist teachers to students of language backgrounds other than English in order to develop their skills in spoken and written English communication. At the same time, TESOL teachers strive to be sensitive to the diverse linguistic, cultural and learning needs of individuals.

TESOL draws on a knowledge of the nature of the English language, first and second language acquisition, crosscultural communication and appropriate curriculum, materials and methodology for multicultural contexts. It is an integral part of the broader social, educational and political context. It can inform and be informed by this context.

As a program, profession and field of study and research, TESOL shares certain understandings and practices with the subject English as a mother tongue, child and adult literacy, languages other than English (LOTE), and bilingual and multilingual education, but also has distinctive characteristics.

ACTA'S OBJECTIVES ARE

TO REPRESENT AND SUPPORT THE INTERESTS OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

ACTA is committed to quality teacher training and professional development in TESOL, working conditions and career paths, which enable teachers to have the stability and continuity of employment to develop, maintain and deliver quality programs.

TO ENSURE ACCESS TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

ACTA is committed to ensuring that all students with ESL needs have access to programs that acknowledge and meet their diverse specific needs. These students may be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, permanent residents with LOTE backgrounds, refugees, fee-paying overseas students or students in Australian-sponsored programs overseas.

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ACTA is committed to the development and maintenance of the highest quality programs, for students, at pre-primary, primary,secondary or tertiary level that are appropriately funded, resourced and staffed, and articulated in clear pathways.

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ACTA is committed to ensuring that TESOL and TESOL-related issues are debated and accorded due recognition in state and national policy initiatives, as well as in the international community.

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Aims	***TESOL in Context*** is the biannual publication of the Australian Council of TESOL Associations for teachers and institutions with TESOL programs. It is designed to be a forum of expression of ideas on all matters related to TESOL. It is the successor to the successful ***TESOL News***.

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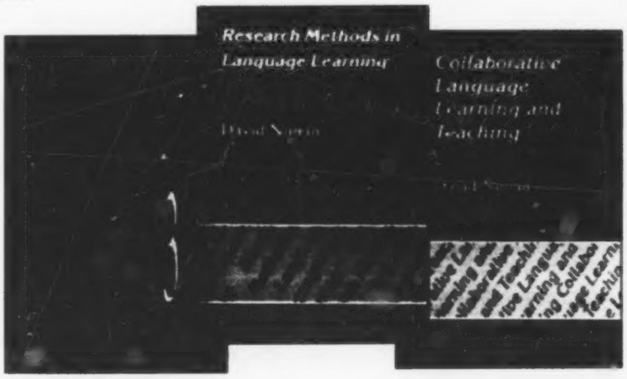
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Teaching and Learning Spoken English

will be the theme of the next issue of

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Teaching and Learning Spoken English

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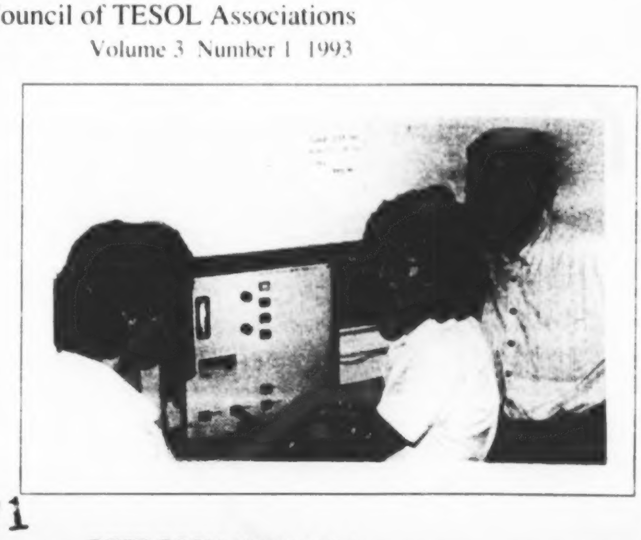

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2. *TESOL Perspectives*, containing articles of 1000 - 2000 words on issues, curriculum strategies and policies;
3. *TESOL Trendsetter*, an interview with a leading TESOL educator. Readers are invited to send questions and issues for comment;
4. *PracTESOL*, which contains articles of 2000 - 3000 words on good ideas and applications, classroom tactics, materials and units of work, etc:
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8. *TESOL Troubleshooter* is a readers' query column, focusing on practical problems and issues raised by readers
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* Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Editorial

Teaching and Learning Spoken English

In this issue, we have chosen articles related to the theme of *Teaching and Learning Spoken English* because we believe that English language teaching in this country for ESL learners and mother tongue speakers is overly dominated by concern with the written language at the expense of the spoken. This is understandable in a literate society, but it also reflects the obsession with assessment for selection in our education systems. In the Victorian Certificate of Education English Units 3 and 4, for example, the oral Common Assessment Task has been set aside because prestigious and powerful tertiary institutions refuse to trust classroom teachers (their own graduates!) and because the task is not easily and cheaply 'verifiable' through an orthodox bureaucratic process. The imbalance in teaching and assessment flies in the face of the fact that the overwhelmingly major proportion of linguistic communication is oral. Even in professional workplaces, spoken communication dominates and is vital. Overseas-trained NESB doctors have reported, for instance, that one of their greatest difficulties and learning priorities is the use of spoken English with other staff and patients rather than reading and writing case notes, histories and all the other written or printed documents. Written English dominates curricula, the content and models of the language presented to learners despite the fact that spoken English is very different from the written code which developed from it. A huge lag in the analysis of spoken English and curriculum materials and strategies for teaching is both cause and effect of this situation and existing knowledge and resources have been too often ignored.

Learners in Australia who are speakers of other languages need access to spoken English for spoken communication in its own right as well as the foundation for building a bridge to improved proficiency in written English. Attention to spoken English would also reveal much about language and power and issues of social justice in TESOL, issues which can be obscured by a disproportionately narrow focus on literacy.

Ian Malcolm addresses such issues, appropriately in this Year of Indigenous People, in his article on who 'owns' English, Australian Aboriginal varieties of English, and Aboriginal communities' English language needs. Our *Perspectives* section reports on recent research into spoken discourse, outlines workplace related oral competencies developed for adult education and questions competency-based curricula in the AMEP.

We introduce a new column, *TESOL Trendsetters*, in which we interview leading TESOL educators. Our first interview is with Penny Ur on accuracy and fluency teaching .

Our practical section begins with some detailed suggestions for teaching pronunciation, particularly intonation, stress, pause and rhythm, vital aspects of TESOL which are unfortunately much neglected. Relevant materials for this and other aspects of teaching spoken English are featured in our first review in the *Reviewer* column and in our *Resources* column. We report major findings from the research into spoken English and suitable related teaching strategies and resources; how to get learners to speak with English speakers outside the classroom and use their experiences and data in class; the complement to speaking: listening; and how to structure interactive classroom talk as the basis for learning and for developing writing skill.

Our *TESOL Talk* with teacher, Kate McPherson, takes up more ideas for getting students talking, as does *TESOL Troubleshooter*.

The themes planned for the forthcoming two issues are:

1. *Teacher research in TESOL*
2. *Making Connections* , picking up the theme of the annual ACTA/WATESOL Conference to be held in Perth in January 1994. ACTA hopes in the first issue for 1994 to encourage sharing and interchange among the adult and child TESOL, preschool, school, TAFE, tertiary, adult literacy, training, mainstream and specialist teachers.

Contributions on these themes in particular and on other relevant topics outside these themes should be forwarded to the Editor **as soon as possible**.

Glossary

ALBE *Adult Literacy Basic Education*

AMEP *Adult Migrant English Program* is the title of the Commonwealth-funded English-language teaching program for adult immigrants in Australia.

ASLPR *Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating* scale which gives an indication of how well an ESL speaker can listen to, speak, read and write English and which is used to place learners in classes of similar levels of English in the Adult Migrant English Program and other adult settings. It is a 12-point scale between 0 (zero proficiency) and 5 (native-like proficiency).

A score of level 1 is roughly minimal survival proficiency, 2 would be minimum social proficiency, 3 would be minimum vocational proficiency and 4 would be vocational proficiency. Level 3 would approximate the bare minimum proficiency needed to take part in other education and training programs.

EAP *English for Academic Purposes /Study Purposes/Further Study* are specific courses of TESOL for students intending to enter senior secondary, TAFE or tertiary courses in various fields. They focus on content and skills for cognitive academic language proficiency.

EFL Students *English as a Foreign Language Students* are overseas students in non-English speaking countries who are studying English. Some EFL students visit Australia to undertake courses in English.

ELICOS *English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students* is the term for short courses for overseas fee-paying students in Australia.

ESB *English-Speaking Background* is the term used in Australia to describe people and communities who speak English as their first language .

ESL Students *English as a Second Language Students* are very diverse in terms of their life, language, cultural and learning experience. Their needs are similarly diverse. Primary and secondary ESL students include:

children beginning school in Australia at the usual commencement age who have had little or no exposure to English, being recently arrived immigrants or Australian-born children whose home language may be a language other than English, in which they may have some literacy;

children beginning school in Australia at the usual commencement age who are acquiring English and another language simultaneously at home;

students starting school in Australia after the usual commencement age without any previous schooling in any country, with little or no English and little or no literacy in their first language, but possibly with work or military experience;

students starting school after the usual commencement age but with severely disrupted schooling;

students who arrive from overseas with about the equivalent amount of schooling in their first language as their peers have had in English. Some may have had some experience of learning English as a Foreign or Second Language overseas;

students (many of whom are Australian-born) who have had the major part of their schooling in Australia but who need assistance to meet the English language demands of mainstream classes;

students from non-English speaking backgrounds who have specific learning difficulties.

ESL students vary in their proficiency in English. Five levels of proficiency in English for non-English speaking background students were identified by Campbell and McMeniman in their 1985 report *Bridging the Gap* for the Commonwealth Schools Commission:

Level 1 Minimal or no English as a Second Language proficiency

Level 2 Elementary ESL

Level 3 Intermediate ESL: the spoken English of these students gives an impression of problem-free fluency, but their reading proficiency is below their age level and their written work shows problems with task comprehension and written expression. Some secondary students may have stronger literacy skills than oral proficiency.

Level 4 Advanced ESL: students at this level can use English effectively in listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks within a limited range of topics and conceptual complexity, but not for all school tasks. They are intellectually able, but have not yet mastered the language of abstract thought and specific subjects.

Level 5 Very Advanced ESL: these students can use spoken and written English effectively for a very wide range of topics and conceptual complexity and can handle the subtleties of humour, innuendo, cultural references and the like in English.

ESP *English for Specific Purposes* are courses teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages for specific occupational or study purposes, such as English for Nurses or English for the Hotel Industry or English for Engineers.

First-Phase Learners , Second-Phase Learners, Third -Phase Learners. While there are as yet no standard definitions or uses of the terms, TESOL writers in some Australian education systems use them. *First-phase learners* are beginners in English and include learners who have yet to reach fluency and confidence in basic, interpersonal, communicative uses of English. *Second-phase learners* can at least communicate at a basic interpersonal level in English and can function to some limited degree in social and formal educational settings. Some writers distinguish only these two phases, others distinguish a *third phase* where learners are developing greater competence in spoken and written English for academic use in educational settings. However, the terms *second-* and *third-phase learners* may sometimes be defined to include NESB students who speak fluent conversational English much like their ESB peers in mainstream classes and whose linguistic and cultural competencies and identities may be unstable. They may have been born in Australia and had most or all of their schooling here and know little of their first language.

IEC/IELC *Intensive English (Language) Centre*

IELTS *International English Language Testing System.* A set of tests developed recently in Australia and Britain and used for selection and placement of EFL/ESL students, especially overseas students, in tertiary education.

LOTE *Languages Other Than English*, a general term used in Australia partly because many languages are used daily for significant purposes in Australian communities and cannot be considered foreign. Some school systems use the term positively to describe children who come from homes where another language is spoken.

L_1 first language

L_2 second or subsequent language

Macro-skills or **the four macro-skills**: the useful term used by many Australian TESOL-trained teachers to refer to listening, speaking, reading and writing. The ordering of the skills is also significant in TESOL thinking.

NESB *Non-English Speaking Background* is used to describe people, communities and their children whose first language is a language other than English.

NLLIA *National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia*

TEFL *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* is used to describe teaching English usually as a branch of study rather than a language of instruction to overseas learners in or from non-English speaking countries.

TESL *Teaching English as a Second Language* is the widely used term for teaching English to non-English speaking background immigrants and their children in Australia, especially at school level, to empower them to participate in Australian society and public life. ESL students here are mostly taught in English.

TESOL *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* covers both TESL and TEFL and the whole range of language and sociocultural contexts in which teaching takes place. It recognises that learners may speak more than one other language or that they may be acquiring English simultaneously with another language. It also recognises that the dominance of each language in the learner's repertoire may change over time.

TESOL Issues

Spoken English...Whose ?

In the context of the increasing recognition of the existence of a range of Englishes throughout the world, **Ian Malcolm** *raises the issue of the English language education needs of indigenous communities in Australia . He calls on the TESOL and the general language arts professions to meet Aboriginal communities' curriculum needs*

Most of us have heard a story of a situation where an Australian travelling overseas gets into conversation with one of the locals and receives a comment to the effect of "You're Australian ? My, what good English you speak !" The story gets told and retold, because to the person it happens to, it is seen as a major affront. It seems to question one's identity as Australian. How could they be ignorant of the fact that English is *our* language ? How many also, perhaps, have had the embarrassing experience of complimenting a Singaporean on his or her English, only to find that to that person, too, it is the language they have always spoken and which they associate fundamentally with their identity ?

Such commonplace experiences as these remind us that the English we lay claim to has a large number of other claimants as well, many of them vastly removed from most Australians in experiential and cultural background. We are a small part of a great company of international stakeholders in the world's most widely distributed linguistic possession. Among these stakeholders, the non-native English speakers outnumber us (those of us who are not among them) two to one (Kachru, 1991b:228). Among them also are those to whose shores English had already travelled when Australia was a totally NESB country.

One of the consequences of this situation is that any feeling of property rights over English which we as native-speaker custodians of the language may wish to exercise is misplaced and likely to be contested. Another is that, as teachers of English to speakers of other languages, we always need to think twice about what English it is that we are teaching, and why.

Increasingly, the formerly uncountable noun *English* has acquired a plural. This is a reflection of its cultural plurality. English can no longer be assumed to be being learned for the purpose of interaction or communication with native speakers of English:

> The reality is that in its localised varieties, English has become the main vehicle for interaction among its non-native users, with distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds - Indians interacting with Nigerians, Japanese with Sri Lankans, Germans with Singaporeans, and so on (Kachru, 1991a: 219).

Now, English learners in Australia would not be expecting us to teach them overseas non-native varieties. However, there are at least two reasons why we should be asking ourselves the question "Whose English?"

The first brings to mind the experience of my first child, who, on entering school, was given the opportunity of learning French as an extra-curricular subject. A parent of another child in the school spoke French and wanted to teach it to the Year 1 students. After a few lessons, my child rapidly lost interest. "What's the matter?" I asked him. "Don't you like learning French?" His response which I found unanswerable in its five-year-old's logic, was: "She wants me to say things that I don't want to say."

Now, as TESOL teachers we are of necessity selecting from the almost limitless resources of English to provide students with the capacity to operate in certain social roles and contexts.

Whose English are we giving them ? Is it something they would want to make their own ? I was given a new resource book to comment on recently. It was for teaching adult migrant English class members. As I leafed through the units, I couldn't help noticing how many of them were focused on situations which might be called the preserve of the Ocker male. This impression was reinforced by the illustrations. Despite the local colour and the entertainment value, I wonder if many learners might react to them in much the same way as my son did to his French lessons.

The other reason I would argue that in Australia we need to be asking ourselves as TESOL teachers the question "Whose English?" is that the Australian-based varieties of English comprise two main groups: those which are used only by Aboriginal speakers and those which are not. I shall refer to the former varieties as Aboriginal English, while recognising that they comprise a so-far undocumented number of dialects, some linguistically closer to and some further from General Australian English.

The question "Whose English?" is particularly relevant when we are teaching Aboriginal learners, since the Aboriginal people themselves are custodians of Aboriginal English and it would be easy for the dominant majority to do violence to this part of their culture as they have so much else of their heritage.

The English varieties that Aboriginal people speak have a significant part of contemporary Aboriginal culture embedded in them. That is why they are distinctive, and that is why they have not, in many parts of the country, been supplanted by the English of the majority.

In research carried out among Aboriginal children living in the Pilbara (Malcolm and Kaldor, 1993), it emerged that schoolchildren who enter school around age 5 speaking Aboriginal English retain throughout the primary years a repertoire of morphological and syntactic variants alongside those of standard English which enables them to select from a wider range of forms to meet the needs of the bicultural context of their lives. Contrary to common perception, such children's English language resources exhibit linguistic supplementation rather than linguistic deficit.

Aboriginal people are well aware of the room which exists within the English-based linguistic systems they command to adapt to a range of contextually-defined needs. Among the words they commonly use to describe the varieties between which they switch are *light, loose, soft, heavy, flash, strong, posh, pure, straight, high, easy, simple*, and *slack* (Malcolm, forthcoming, p.7).

There will be a range of English language learning needs among Aboriginal people in educational settings. Some will be like other NESB learners to whom English is essentially a foreign language. It is important not to assume that these people want to learn to speak like white Australians. It will be *EAP*: English for Aboriginal purposes. The point is well made in a record of a conversation with a man from the Pitjantjatjara country made by H.H. Penny:

> The people *want* their children to learn English at school ?
> Uwa (yes)
> Is it all right for the children to speak English in the camp ?
> Kura, kura (Bad, bad)
> Do the parents want their children to speak English to each other?
> Wiya (no)
> Do your people *really* want the children to learn English ?
> Uwa, here. (and here he tapped three or four times with cupped hand to ear)
> Want them to *hear* English.
> To speak English ?
> Some, to talk to white fellers.
> To write letters ?
> A few. Letters, cheque, all that. Want white people teach my

> **people English. When my people learn more, white people go. (Brumby and Vaszolyi, 1977:157).**

Other Aboriginal learners have needs which require a quite different educational approach. They are already possessors of English for local purposes but they require an auxiliary form of the language for use in educational and other settings. They cannot be treated as ESL or EFL learners, since English, of an Aboriginal kind, is as basic to their culture and identity as another kind of English is to other Australians. They need a system of education which will recognise and sustain what they have and build up alongside it what they still need. They need bidialectal education, on the two-way model.

We have scarcely begun to work out how to meet needs such as those of this latter group of learners. It is clear that the processes of English language development that they are going through are more complex than those of monodialectal speakers (Malcolm and Kaldor, 1993). It is one of the challenges facing people at the interface of TESOL and general language arts education to build on the growing body of research data on their linguistic situation and develop contextually appropriate curricula and methodologies which will meet their pressing need.

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TESOL Perspectives

Spoken Discourse in the TESOL Classroom

***Anne Burns** describes a recent project undertaken by the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research at Macquarie University and two groups of AMEP teachers from New South Wales and South Australia. The project looked at the nature of spoken discourse and its implications for teaching.*

Introduction

The project adopted an applied linguistic and action research base, drawing cooperatively on the expertise of both the researcher and the practitioner. This collaborative approach was a significant aspect of the Spoken Language Project, as its major purpose was to be of practical assistance to classroom practitioners. The project therefore deliberately incorporated interrelated cycles of theoretical input, data collection and analysis and action research. The project coordinator and the teachers had equally significant but different roles. These roles changed in emphasis as the project progressed. The focus at the beginning of the project was on theoretical input. However, this focus changed as the teachers undertook the practical components of recording, transcribing and together, analysing the spoken data they had collected. The pedagogical implications also assumed greater prominence as the teachers discussed, developed and trialed different methodological approaches for teaching spoken discourse in their own classrooms.

Why focus on authentic spoken discourse in the classroom?

Traditionally in teaching spoken language, dialogue or conversation, language teachers have relied on scripted materials. These are materials constructed by course book writers which are based on their assumptions of what is uttered in various situational contexts. They can be described as introspected or in other words deriving from the writer's intuitions about the nature of spoken language. They are often accompanied by audio or video materials, which are also scripted. Porter and Roberts (1981) point out various ways in which scripted samples of spoken language differ from natural speech.

Table 1: Typical features of language materials written for spoken language development

Pronunciation
- tends to be 'standard' pronunciation (RP, etc.) and often different from what learners will hear
- usually enunciated with great precision

Structural repetition
- particular structures and functions occur with unnatural frequency

Complete sentences
- sentences are short and well-formed

Distinct turn-taking
- one speaker waits until the other has finished

Pace
- this is typically slow and deliberate

Quantity
- speakers generally say about the same amount

Attention signals
- backchannelling (*uhuh, ahah*, etc.) is generally missing

Formality

- materials are biased towards standardised language
- swearing, slang and idioms are rare

Limited vocabulary

- there are few references to specific real-world entities and events, ie culturally-based events and knowledge

Too much information

- generally more explicit reference to people, objects and experiences than in natural speech (ie does not reflect redundancy based on context, shared knowledge etc)

Mutilation

- texts are rarely marred by outside noise or inclusion of simultaneous fields

(Adapted from Porter and Roberts, 1981)

Slade (1986, 1990) suggests that few materials used for the teaching of spoken language to non-native speakers of English have represented the nature of authentic spoken discourse. Classroom materials which are based on scripted samples deauthenticate speech. They are generally derived from grammars of written English. As a result, they often omit the essential elements and strategies which are employed when spoken discourse is jointly constructed. Since they often take functional categories, eg apologising, requesting, as their starting point they reverse the natural order of spoken discourse. This means that the situational context of natural discourse is reduced to being the vehicle for the target function or structure.

In the project we took the view that traditional classroom materials may be less than adequate if we wish to provide non-native speakers of English with more powerful and informed understandings of the nature of naturally occurring spoken discourse and of the strategies needed for more effective communication in English. One of the primary concerns of the NCELTR project, then, was to begin with naturally occurring spoken discourse. It involved recording, transcribing and analysing authentic samples of spoken language. Our intention was to develop relevant descriptions which could be used to trial teaching approaches with non-native adult speakers. The project focused also on investigating the nature of interaction where interactants may hold:

- different cultural and world views
- different cultural and social purposes
- different ways of achieving purposes within texts

A further aim was to develop linguistic tools which teachers could use for analysing authentic and extended samples of text and to consider methodologies for teaching authentic spoken discourse in the adult ESL classroom.

Theoretical background to the project

The discussions and analyses of the data drew broadly on recent research and theory applied to spoken discourse analysis. They included systemic-functional linguistics (Halliday, 1985; Poynton, 1985; Eggins, 1990; Martin, 1992) as the major informing theory, as well as conversation analysis (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984), pragmatics (Brown and Yule, 1983; Thomas, 1983), cross-cultural communication (Gumperz and Roberts, 1991) and critical discourse theory (Kress and Hodge, 1979; Fairclough, 1989). Amongst the theoretical insights informing the project and therefore the implications for teaching spoken language were:

- Speech is culturally and socially motivated and varies according to the social context of situation

- It occurs through extended forms of discourse or text and the patterns of language use are influenced by the field (or setting and activity), tenor (or the relationships between the people involved) and mode (or the channel of communication)

- It involves two major forms of functional interaction; interpersonal (or interactional) and pragmatic (or transactional). Interpersonal genres focus primarily on creating and maintaining social relationships (eg casual conversation). Pragmatic or transactional genres focus primarily on achieving practical outcomes (eg service encounters, commercial transactions).

- Spoken genres have evolved to respond to the values of the culture. They unfold according to stages which have their own social purpose and which contribute to the overall communicative purpose of the text as a whole.

- Tenor or the nature of social role relationships is significant in spoken interactions. How we respond to the unpredictability of spoken interactions and the language we use to address each other determines the speech roles we adopt (in other words, how we are positioned in the interaction).

Using such theoretical insights the project participants were able to analyse the texts they had collected and to identify:

- the functional motivation of the discourse (primarily interpersonal or pragmatic)
- the general social purpose of the text
- the internal purpose and therefore the obligatory or optional stages within each text
- the speech functions that were being performed and by whom
- how the speech functions were realised in the lexicogrammar
- the role played by tenor relationships in the interaction

Exchange structure theory developed by Berry (1981) within a systemic-functional model was also used. Berry suggests that the exchange, or the unit which is concerned with the negotiation of the transmission of information, consists of a sequence of four functional slots. Within the exchange the speaker can take one of two roles; the K1 role or primary knower or the K2 role or secondary knower. The primary knower is 'someone who already knows the information' (Berry, 1981:9) while the secondary knower is 'someone to whom the information is imparted' (Berry 1981:10). Analysing spoken discourse in relation to who takes up the position as primary knower enabled us to determine how knowledge and action were being dynamically negotiated at each stage. It also helped us to perceive critical points in the discourse. These critical points have important implications for who takes control and power at each stage of the interaction.

Implications for teaching

What advantages and insights can be gained from analysing natural spoken data and what aspects of analysis can be used for teaching in language classrooms? While it is not always easy to collect authentic speech samples or to use them with ESL learners, we would argue there is much to be gained from a greater awareness of how spoken language is used discoursally.

One of the texts collected in the project provides an illustration of the insights into pragmatically motivated spoken interaction which can be gained through analysis (Pedler, 1992). The text involves a telephone service encounter between a teacher (T) and an immigration office employee (I). The teacher rings the office on behalf of a student to get information on how to sponsor a parent. The call is notable for the professionalism involved in the interaction (the teacher declares his status in initiating the enquiry), the shift which develops in the role relationships and the strategies the caller uses to achieve this shift. The teacher-caller is positioned as the secondary knower in the discourse. However the discourse strategies he uses enables him to shift the tenor relationship from unequal to equal status. He uses careful backchannelling which includes checking back and summarising the information he is given at each stage, as Text 1 illustrates:

Text 1: Backchannelling and Information Summarising

T: What kind of qualifications does she need to pass the points test?
I: Um, a trade certificate. Like say she's a qualified hairdresser for instance and she's got years of experience.
T: Um
I: We recognise that
T: Right
I: Uh. So it can vary from anything from being a hairdresser to having a tertiary degree
T: Right
I: OK
T: Now, uh, if she can't get in under the points system if she's under sixty and she can't get in under the points system...after two years, her children can get her in on a normal sponsored parent basis, on a family reunion basis
I: On a family reunion, yes

A significant aspect of the gradual shift in tenor is in the way the caller extends the call beyond the obligatory stages of the generic text. At the beginning of the interaction, the official's preferred response is to give the minimum necessary information and to signal as early as possible that he is ready to close. The caller continues to extend the interaction by asking additional questions which puts an obligation on the official to answer. This happens three times.

The caller gradually positions himself as the primary knower by his persistence, by not allowing the immigration employee to close the interaction and by asking hypothetical *what if?* questions, for example when the category of parent is not known. In the following excerpt the caller uses both summarising and hypothetical questioning to extend the interaction:

Text 2: Information Summarising and Hypothesising

I: Well, there's a two year residency requirement if she's an aged parent. How old is she?
T: I don't know how old she is.
I: If she's below sixty years of age
T: Um
I: Um, and that are... She'll have to be put through the points test
T: Um
I: And if that's the case then there is no the enquiry (sic)
T: Um
I: However if she's an aged parent, um, that's sixty years for a woman, then there's the two years' residency requirement
T: So right, if she's under sixty she can apply under the normal points system
I: Yes. They can sponsor her because she'll be put through the points test and it will depend on her qualifications and her experience
T: What happens if she's a typical Middle Eastern mother who doesn't have any qualifications and experience, because she's been a mother?
I: And she's below sixty
T: Yeah
I: Well there's not much there for her. She can always apply but the likelihood of her being accepted would be greatly limited. Um, that's one of the main problems here

Using these strategies (*So, right....* and *What happens if....*) the caller is able to establish solidarity with the immigration official. He goes on to draw on the fact that both speakers are professionals with a common humanity. By later expressing a personal attitude, the caller leads the official into offering what could be said to be a justification. The official even provides a personal comment on immigration agents through the use of modality, hedges and indirection. Realignment of the tenor relationships is achieved through the use of *well*, when the questions or summary is not quite right. As the tenor changes to one of more equal status, there is greater solidarity, which emerges in the language structures and patterns through the greater use of less formal language, slang and idiomatic expressions.

Having an awareness of what is occurring in spoken text allows us to identify features which can be taught to our learners, which more truly represent the spoken discourse of everyday life. From the project we were able to develop some general principles which can be applied to teaching spoken language to adult learners at a variety of levels:

1. The text types collected were recognisable as serving a cultural purpose in Australian society. However, not all these texts are present in all cultures and ESL learners need knowledge about language use which may be culturally unfamiliar. Explicit teaching can include:
- discussion and instruction about the cultural similarities and differences which relate to a particular context of situation
- knowledge of the vocabulary and lexicogrammatical patterns, discussion of the roles and relationships of discourses which are culturally dissimilar

2. Learners need to know and understand the overall structure of spoken texts. This means that we need to work

with real and extended samples of authentic spoken text. Maintaining the use of introspected scripted discourse may ultimately be disempowering for non-native speakers. It fails to recognise the high degree of cultural and social knowledge and initiative-taking which characterises effective spoken discourse. Explicit teaching can include:

- the predictable and obligatory stages of typical spoken texts in our culture.
- an understanding of where learners are in the interaction and where they may be going
- the possible non-obligatory stages which may be introduced to keep the interaction going

3. Learners can be taught the fairly standard and recognisable ways that language is realised at different stages of the discourse. Explicit teaching can include:

- discussion and practice with learners of the ways that different stages are worked through by the interactants
- discussion and role-playing of different roles in terms of knowledge which are taken by the participants
- analysis of the possible ways these roles are realised through the lexicogrammatical patterns (eg use of modality).
- extending awareness of the pragmatic functions of the different speech acts making up the interaction.

4. Learners can be made more aware of the various ways that tenor relationships can affect language functions and patterns. They can also be taught strategies to shift these relationships. Explicit teaching can include:

- negotiating tenor (power /status /connection /solidarity)
- negotiating texts (extending, persevering, getting what you want by taking the interaction further and taking initiative)
- turntaking
- interrupting
- the role of channelling and feedback
- challenging (the dispreferred option in the exchange)
- critical points in the interaction which shifts the roles and relationships

Conclusion

Native speakers have implicit understandings of the context of culture in which spoken language occurs. Second language learners however, need teachers to share their knowledge of spoken discourse forms and structures. They need to develop with teachers a shared metalanguage which gives them the means to understand actual discourse patterns. From our project we have learned that language and the positions we take up as speakers are never neutral. We have also learned that it is possible to renegotiate your positioning within what seems to be even the simplest interchange.

Using authentic data in the classroom is empowering for both teachers and learners. If we draw on real discourse samples and develop tools for their analysis, then we no longer have to rely on implicit understandings or on our intuitions as native speakers. Nor do we need to rely on introspected and scripted samples of speech. To empower our learners we ourselves need to be empowered by more explicit knowledge of discourse. We can then share our understanding that discourse roles and relationships are not fixed and that they differ from one culture to another. We can begin to help learners understand the discourse roles and strategies expected in the target culture. If we do this we can more fully ensure that they do not become passive recipients of the discourse practices of that culture but are enabled to take more control over the powerful forms of language in daily life.

Acknowledgments

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From Literacies to Oracies

***Chris Corbel** describes the development of a set of oral competencies for the Victorian Adult Education Language, Literacy and Numeracy Accreditation Framework.*

Introduction

The Victorian Adult Education Language, Literacy and Numeracy Accreditation Framework project has been underway for the past three years. Its purpose is to support adult basic education provision among community-based providers, TAFE colleges and workplaces. It is designed to:

- provide sequential learning arrangements for students in a range of contexts
- articulate into employment, adult, community and further education, vocational education and training
- facilitate personal and community development needs
- provide a common language for practitioners to use to report on student progress referenced against agreed adult benchmarks.

There have been three major elements in the project: competency statements for literacy, published at the beginning of 1992, the Certificate of Adult General Education, which was nationally accredited at the end of 1992, and supporting curriculum material, which is currently being developed.

This paper presents a brief overview of the oral competencies, which were developed during 1992 to complement the literacy competencies developed during the first phase of the project. The work on the oral competencies had two main influences: the literacies identified in prior work in this project and work on the analysis of oracy and speech from various areas within applied linguistics

Work on reading, writing and numeracy had already been done, and was based on the following, taken from the *Adult Basic Education Accreditation Framework Project* 1991 Report, Volume 1: 7

"The Adult Reading and Writing Competence Statements are based on nine inter-connected educational principles. These nine principles are:

- *one*, that "literacy" cannot be talked about if it is a monolithic undifferentiated whole, but rather that it needs to be seen as an amalgam of distinctive "literacies" requiring a range of capacities to read and write texts that have been constructed for quite particular social purposes;

- *two*, that four "literacies" - herein named as literacy for self-expression, literacy for practical purposes, literacy for knowledge and literacy for participation in public debate - are fundamental to the development of the versatile and critical competence needed for active participation in family, community and civic life, the workplace and commercial life, education and governmental institutions;

- *three*, that the four literacies, whilst named separately for the purpose of highlighting which literacies define literacy competence today, are not autonomous compartments that exist apart from each other;

- *four*, that this literacy model does not concentrate on meaning at the expense of "the basics";

- *five*, that the development of competence in various literacies is intimately entwined with, and influenced by, cognitive, emotional, psychological and social factors;

- *six*, that ALBE programs, if they are to contribute to adults being effectively functioning human being in a late twentieth century western society like Australia, need to teach students to recognise, interpret, use, critique and adapt the various "literacies" and related texts that exist in a shape our contemporary society;

- *seven*, that although different ALBE programs may emphasise a specific literacy, they will be unable to totally exclude the other literacies;

- *eight*, that the scope of ALBE can be seen as a developmental pathway from the earliest stages of reading and writing to an increasing capacity to undertake a wide range of employment, vocational training, and other formal study (including Victorian Certificate of Education) opportunities, and that based on Victorian ALBE program trends, four key milestones can be identified along this pathway;

- *nine*, that this curriculum framework, whilst inevitably culture-bound and time-bound like any human artefact constructed at a particular historical point in time, is designed to be flexible enough to accommodate a vast array of contexts and ALBE purposes."

The nature of spoken language

The other major influence on the oracies was a survey of the nature and teaching of spoken language, which led to the following guiding ideas:

Speech is structured and complex, and is not merely a simple form of writing. Although it fundamentally shares much in common, it is different from writing in that

- it involves more than one person interacting to jointly produce a piece of language
- it takes place in "real" time; it cannot be separated from the passage of time; the production of speech is irreversible
- it reflects our ability to comprehend and produce language in real time
- it provides different ways of showing meaning, such as tone of voice
- it tends to be used in different situations from writing

Competence is not simply knowledge of language, but the ability to use that knowledge to achieve a purpose. Competence involves both speaking and listening, and also reading and writing. It suggests that these are integrated in a natural way. It acknowledges that all participants have an active role in situations involving speech.

Organisation of the Competencies

The Literacy Competencies

The literacy competencies are organised into domains, each of which contains typical text types, which are based on a number of genres.

Domains	*(text types)*	(genres)
Self Expression	stories, poetry, autobiographies, letter, diaries, journals, novels	narratives, recounts, anecdotes, moral tales
Practical Purposes	instruction sheets, manuals, forms, directions, signs, notices, handbooks	instructions, procedures
Knowledge	textbooks, non-fiction interest books, information sheets, dictionaries	explanations, information reports
Public Debate	columns, letters, to the editor, editorials, policy documents	arguments, expositions, discussions

The Oral Competencies

The oral competencies are organised into the same domains, each of which contains typical speech events, which are based on a number of "episodes". The term episodes is used to refer to combinations of variables (interactional/transactional, structured/unstructured, dialogic/monologic) which underlie the various speech events. One of these episodes has been selected to be the reference point for each of the oracies, on the basis of its relevance for social and work life.

Domains	*speech events*	*"episode"*
Self Expression	casual conversations, story telling, anecdotes	social - talking casually to acquaintances or strangers
Practical Purposes	teaching, instructing, service encounters	support - explaining how to d something
Knowledge	talks, lectures	presentation - giving a talk
Public Debate	meetings, discussions, debates	exploratory - addressing an issue as a member of a group

An Example - Oracy for Practical Purposes

The following material shows the presentation of one of the four oracies. A description of the oracy and a glossary of terms that appear in the actual competency level descriptions appears below, followed by the competencies presented in levels. Each level contains two parts. The first part is an introductory sentence which summarises the situational variables that make the task more or less difficult. The second part contains five statements about how well a person must perform in order to demonstrate the competency at that level. The five statements are about *strands* that underlie the competence. Terms appearing in bold are explained on this page. More detailed explanations are found elsewhere in the document.

Oracy for Practical Purposes

This competency is based on *support episodes*, in which the individual is called upon to provide assistance to another person. It may relate to their expertise in a particular area of knowledge or skill, such as when an individual is asked by a colleague for help with a computer program, or simply giving directions in the street. It may be talk that accompanies action. The speaker is interested in the listener knowing *how* to do something, rather than simply having knowledge about it.
Activities that involve support episodes include:

- assembling an object
- fixing an object
- demonstrating the working of equipment
- teaching someone to do something
- giving directions

This oracy focuses on competence in "functional forms of communication which are now a crucial aspect of everyday competence within modern life."

Some representative speech events: assembling, demonstrating, instructing, service encounters in shops, workplace, etc.

Common episodes: support, service, vocalising.

Facilitation
- simplifying grammatical structures; eg the use of *and* as a linking device
- ellipsis: the use of short phrases and incomplete sentences
- formulaic expressions: set expressions and phrases
- time-creating devices: fillers

Negotiation
The process of jointly creating shared meaning in oral discourse. Less negotiation is needed when participants share common understandings.

Checking
- of common ground
- that other participant has understood

Intelligibility
This refers to the influence of a person's grammar or pronunciation on the ease with which they can be understood

Expository routines
These are recurring types of factual information structure.

Support episodes
Relatively unstructured transactional exchanges

Adapting
- clarifying
- rephrasing
- giving examples or analogies
- summarising

Providing feedback
- checking understanding, query and repair as necessary
- providing responses to indicate that the discourse is being followed
- indicating current interpretations
- providing prompts for the speaker to continue
- organise turn taking and provide obligatory responses
- providing indicators of how s/he is reacting to the other's statements and intents

Supporting
- checking common ground
- adapting to points made by the other participant(s)
- asking for opinions or information.
- understanding that other person may have different expectations of the exchange
- indicating friendliness

Level 1

Can participate in **support episodes** involving few turns, involving **no negotiation**, two participants who know each other, one of whom may be highly skilled as a participant, by:

a) using everyday terms, involving, highly familiar content which is strongly supported by context,
b) possibly moving between *you* and *I*
c) **Intelligibility** may make demands on listeners.
d) Limited use of **expository routines**, very infrequent **checking** and **adaptation** to points made by other participant, limited **facilitation** of understanding
e) Very infrequent use of **feedback** to the speaker

Level 2

Can participate in support episodes involving several turns, two or three participants who are known to the speaker, involving a minimum of **negotiation**, by:

a) using familiar content, though the context is less immediately supportive
b) describing the process clearly.
c) **Intelligibility** makes occasional demands on listeners.
d) Some use of **expository routines,** some **facilitation** of understanding and some **checking** and **adaptation** to points made by other participant
e) Some use of **feedback** to the speaker

Level 3

Can participate in **support episodes** involving several turns, less familiar or more abstract content , two or three participants who are workplace colleagues, involving **negotiation,** where the context is supportive, by:

a) using a variety of routines (explanation, instruction, comparison) to ensure understanding, regular **facilitation** of understanding
b) using a variety of tones from formal to informal, as appropriate
c) providing attention to detail. **Intelligibility** rarely makes demands on listeners.
d) appropriate use of **expository routines,** using appropriate sequences (eg, logical, chronological), **checking** and **adaptation**
e) *Regular* use of **feedback** to the speaker.

Level 4

Can participate in **support episodes** involving many turns, numerous participants who may not be known to each other, involving considerable **negotiation**, by:

a) using specialist language if appropriate, using unfamiliar or abstract content, where the context is minimally supportive
b) possibly including a commentary as well as clear instructions
c) providing a very detailed information about how, when, with what and when, without ambiguity. **Intelligibility** makes no demands on listeners.
d) staging the process to facilitate understanding, and well-developed **checking** and **adaptation** and well-developed **facilitation** of understanding
e) well-developed use of **feedback** to the speaker.

Strands a) subject matter b) tone c) language d) shape e) as listener

The oral competencies became available towards the end of 1992, and since then a number of professional development activities have taken place and curriculum material is being trialed.

Further information about the oral competencies or any other aspect of the project can be obtained from Adult, Community and Further Education Regional Offices or from Pam O'Neil at the Office of Adult, Community and Further Education, Ministry of Education and Training, Victoria. Tel (03) 628 3972.

Chris Corbel is Coordinator of Curriculum and Professional Development at AMES (Victoria) and wrote the oral competencies for the Adult Basic Education Framework Project.

Competency-Based Curricula and the Certificate in Spoken and Written English

"Competencies" are presently dominating the field of education. Much has been said about the importance of competency-based curricula, but what will these changes mean for classroom teachers? ***Rob Lewis*** *explores some of the difficulties presented by the new* **Certificate in Spoken and Written English,** *a competency-based curriculum presently being implemented in the Adult Migrant English Program across Australia.*

Introduction

Despite the litany of publications on competency-based education and training, there has been a scarcity of open debate as to its relative merits for both teachers and students in the Adult Migrant English Program. Claims of greater "relevance, systematicity and professionalism" (Carmichael, 1992; Finn, 1992; Ruby, 1992) have overshadowed a disquiet amongst teachers. Competency-based curricula are the centrepiece of the new reform agenda currently revolutionising Australia's education and training systems. In the Adult Migrant English Program the *Certificate in Spoken and Written English* (CSWE) is the state-of-the-art in competency-based curricula. Like other competency-based curricula the CSWE contains a number of contradictions, reflecting, among other things, the political process and economic imperatives of the new reform agenda.

Competencies as Guidelines

With the implementation of the CSWE, initial criticism has naturally focussed on pragmatic concerns, like the interpretation of new curricular guidelines. Some teachers have expressed the view that the Core competencies of the CSWE are unrealistic, vague and, given the various demands and constraints on their time, difficult to translate into practice. It is understood that the authors of the CSWE have generalised a set of proposed 'outcomes' (as competencies) for students. But in so doing these competencies are seen as idealised 'normative behaviours', abstracted from any empirical basis, and reified as standards of performance. Many of the Core competencies suffer from this process of abstraction, leaving their interpretation problematic. Consider the following examples:

1. *Can understand the context of the language classroom.*
3. *Can understand spoken instructions in a relevant context.*
(Core Competencies: Stage 1)

2. *Can use a range of learning strategies.*
3. *Can understand and give spoken instructions in a range of contexts.*
5. *Can negotiate oral transactions for goods and services in a range of contexts.*
8. *Can read procedural texts in a relevant context.*
12. *Can write short reports.*
Core Competencies: Stage 2)

5. *Can participate in group discussions relevant to .... contexts.*
(Core Competencies: Stage 3)

Common to most of the examples above are the rather nebulous locative expressions: *in a relevant context / in a range of contexts.* Well might one question what is meant or intended by such vague qualification. What are the range of contexts implied? What contexts are not relevant to a speaker? How are teachers to know what contexts are relevant or irrelevant to their students? And even if it were possible to know the range of contexts of relevance to all learners in a class, how is one to go about accommodating their likely divergent linguistic needs pertaining to a *range of contexts* ? We are left to speculate as to the purpose of such apparently underqualified overgeneralisation.

When one refers to the breakdown of the Core competencies into smaller, component Elements (or tasks), one finds them specified in much narrower terms. Because the Core competencies are overgeneralised, and Elements so narrowly specified, these smaller component tasks do not, as their authors logically suggest, equate with the Core competency. In other words, the sum of the parts do not the whole (competency) make. For instance, Stage 1 Core competency no. 1, suggests that a person (x) *can understand the context of local services including community services, further education and employment.* This is broken down into three basic outcomes/tasks: the ability to (i) identify service providers (eg TAFE, CES, schools), (ii) understand their main functions, and (iii) be familiar with the key vocabulary related to the three fields of education, employment and community services (See page 15). What is stated as the core competency is a very general claim, but once re-specified it is reduced to fragments of the original proposition. In this process, what has come of the meaning of *to understand the context of local services, including further education, employment and community services*? To suggest that the three outcomes are the same as the stated core competency is very problematic. Notions of understanding and context are in this way debased, and knowledge per se, reduced to a simple behaviour, is further impoverished as a set of simpler linguistic and cognitive behaviours.

Many of the skills-type core competencies are similarly misleading. Stated as overgeneralised linguistic behaviours, they assume transferability across a range of social contexts. They belie the fact that a person's capacity to perform such tasks is differentially constrained by the sociolinguistic resources which s/he can mobilise for their realisation; and unlike native speakers, non-English speaking background migrants do not have the requisite sociolinguistic resources to call on for language-skills transfer. Most learners will be limited to writing or reading the genres which they have covered in class, within the field constraints of vocabulary taught in class. Some, of course, who read and write widely and have access to native speakers, might be capable of transferring their learnt skills to other contexts. But this is unlikely for the vast majority of first phase NESB learners.

The Process of Reform

The political process of reform, including curriculum reform, has been characterised as an essentially top-down procedure, with teachers conspicuously and precariously placed at the end of the chain of command. The opening remarks of a recent EPAC report unabashedly acknowledges this fact:

> Many felt that the current process, whereby administrators and government officials are felt to be directing the agenda, without having worked at the coalface, is having a negative impact. There is a need for providing positive motivation for those who are expected to implement change.
> (Clare, R. 1992: 3)

The inherent contradictions and compromises built into the CSWE evidence the gap between those who make the policies, those who write curricula and those who are left to implement them. What is now becoming evident to teachers implementing the new curricula is the extent to which their work is also being transformed in this process. Along with interpreting the new curricula, operationalising the new system of assessment and accreditation means more paperwork and more time away from the task for which teachers have been employed in the first place - teaching. Were it the case that the CSWE was merely a descriptive curriculum, unconditionally recommended to teachers who could modify it to suit their students' needs, and do so without the operational constraints of the tendering and accreditation systems, then it might be a vastly different proposition altogether.

However the CSWE, like other Competency-based Education and Training (CBET) curricula, is a compulsory framework and undeniably prescriptive. It positions teachers and learners as trainers and trainees - roles that are consistent with the instrumentalist tendencies of the overall reforms. (See Tollefson, 1986; Auerbach, 1986; Hammond, 1992; Marginson, 1993). This so-called pedagogical revolution makes it mandatory for teachers to teach to the specifications of the competency-based curricular handbooks. Little space is left for innovation, except within the terms of the new orthodoxy. The assumption here is that the educational experts have got it right, and that what is prescribed is what is best for all concerned - a case of pedagogical dogmatism. When curriculum reforms have reduced teachers' work to training and testing and ticking boxes, visions of 'professionalising' teachers work are just that - visions.

Given the positivist rhetoric surrounding CBET it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the development of these new curricula is part and parcel of the agenda of industrial restructuring and enterprise bargaining. Through language and skills audits in the workplace employers will be provided with competencies specifications. These can be used as curricula for developing training, as well as data for restructuring the workplace. Not surprisingly the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee has rejected competency-based curricula for universities. Professor David Pennington, Melbourne University Vice-Chancellor has described competency-based education as "a 'behavioural nightmare' of centrally controlled minimal standards, linked to industrial agreements and remuneration" (Juddery, 1993: 4). The fact that the education system is being explicitly and strategically deployed to serve economic interests under the ideological banner of 'national development' is not to be questioned. (See Luke, 1993). Ironically, as ESL teachers come to terms with the new Competency-based curricula, they themselves might face a future subject to the same industrial 'downsizing' taking place in other work environments - through the process of developing competency-based specifications like the Certificate in Spoken and Written English.

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TESOL Trendsetter

Learning and Teaching Spoken English

*In this new section of **TESOL in Context**, we collected the ten most-asked questions on learning and teaching spoken English for **Penny Ur**, well-known author and plenary speaker at the last ACTA/ATESOL National Conference in January 1993.*

1. What do people need to learn?

In spoken English, they need to know the forms of the language (pronunciation, lexis, grammar) and how these are used to receive or convey meanings. To some extent the two aspects (roughly, accuracy and fluency) can, and I think should, be separated in the classroom: there will be times when we are foregrounding a particular language item, or set of items, and times when we are concentrating on general communication. Ultimately, of course, the aim is to integrate the two: to get students to make effective meanings through using accurate language forms.

2. What sort of spoken English?

I aim for spontaneous, informal speech, on the basis that this is the kind of spoken language most people use nearly all the time. I don't worry too much about the different variations of discourse (covering specific spoken genres, for example); the main goal, for me, is to give the students opportunities for as much speaking-and-listening experience in the foreign language as possible. Remember, though, that I am teaching in a context where lessons are the only place my students get this experience. In Australia, where the students are (one hopes!) getting quite a lot of this experience outside the classroom, the priorities are necessarily different.

3. How explicit is your teaching?

Fairly explicit. In practice, I try to combine explicit telling and focused practice on particular language forms with more task-based communicative work. I believe this to be a good basic principle of language teaching; the problem is to find the most effective balance of the two aspects. Again, this will depend to a large extent on your teaching context.

4. How do you get *all* the students to participate?

I don't. I try to get *as many as possible* to participate: *all* may be impossible, at least in the short term; and I'm not going to get depressed over having failed to achieve the impossible.

So, - as many as possible ? Various strategies: the use of small-group or pair-work; the appointing of a chairperson for each group, whose job is, among others, to encourage participation; the design of a task that is likely to encourage or demand participation; my own activity during the exercise: going round groups and trying tactfully to encourage quieter students to talk.

5. How do you cater for disparate levels?

One of the hallmarks of a well-designed task is that it does cater for disparate levels. An activity which gives the same kind of text-based, pre-structured task to each student (some kinds of jigsaw exercises for example) is going to be too difficult for some and not challenging enough for others. I prefer open-ended tasks such as brainstorms, problem-solving, prioritising, where the basic task is simple enough so that everyone can understand and participate in it, but at the same time elastic enough to allow for fairly sophisticated contributions.

6. What about pronunciation teaching?

In Israel, where I teach, very little work is done on pronunciation, the assumption being that students will pick it up satisfactorily through intuitive acquisition processes. But this all depends what you mean by 'satisfactorily'! My own feeling is that it is worthwhile, in terms of learning outcomes, to take the time to focus on and practise particular items of phonology, stress or intonation. Exactly what items these are will depend, of course, on the students' performance and problems.

7. Should you correct spoken English, and if so, when?

Yes, sometimes. The essential rule is: is this correction cost-effective? In other words, is the bit of learning the students will get from it so worthwhile that it repays the disturbance? If the students are floundering for a word, or obviously aware that they are saying something unacceptable and uncomfortable about it - it is worth stepping in. Or if there is something I think is really important to get across, and see this as a good opportunity.

8. What is the role of L1?

I teach in monolingual classes: my main problem is to keep students from lapsing into the mother tongue! But the L1 has positive roles as well: mainly, in order to keep my own interventions brief! For example, at lower levels it enables me to give instructions more quickly, thus gaining time for the discussion itself; to put in a rapid explanation of a correction without disturbing the flow of the discussion; to give a quick translation of a word instead of a lengthy definition.

9. How do you choose what situations, contexts, content areas are most important?

I try to choose those which have some relevance to the students in their present or future life. This does not necessarily mean replicating their own daily interactions or transactions; very imaginative, even fantasy situations can also provide a basis for relevant speech experience.

10. What do you see as the significant trends in learning and teaching English?

Today, I think there is a perceptible swing away from the extreme communicative approach with its accompanying emphasis on functions and notions, and (back?) towards explicit grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary teaching. I think this is a good thing - provided that the pendulum does not swing too far, and that we retain a sensible balance that results in maximally effective learning for our students.

Another very important trend is the change in our perceptions of the sources of professional knowledge. Up till recently it has been taken for granted that university research and theorising were the main authority; now it is increasingly acknowledged that practising teachers' classroom experience and reflection is at least as important. The job of this generation of professionals - both teachers and researchers - is to find a way of integrating the two in order to advance knowledge and knowledgeable practice for us all.

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PracTESOL

It's Not What You Say But How You Say It!

*In this article **Julie Hebert** argues that too often ESL teachers neglect pronunciation or focus on problems of single sounds at the expense of more significant global features. She provides an approach with some detailed examples of how to teach these global features.*

Introduction

To communicate effectively, language learners need to become proficient in using the semantic, syntactic, lexical, morphological and phonological elements of the language being learnt. They also need to understand its pragmatic use. The focus in ESL literature has tended to be on grammatical, thematic and functional approaches to ESL syllabus design. As the title of this paper suggests, intelligibility entails more than simply using appropriate lexical items and correct word order: words stressed incorrectly or inappropriate pitch or intonation will impede the learner getting their intended message across. Phonology then, should be an integral part of any ESL lesson/syllabus. What follows is an outline of one way to approach incorporating a phonological component into ESL lessons. It is based on the following assumptions about oral communication:

1. Speaking usually involves two or more people who use language for interactional or transactional purposes. It is not the oral expression of written language. This should reflected in the type of activities used in ESL classrooms.

2. Spoken language imparts referential and affective meaning. When we speak we reveal our interest and attitudes towards the topic being discussed and to the people we are speaking with. These messages are largely conveyed through the prosodic features of language: stress and rhythm, intonation, pitch variation and volume. For these reasons it would seem essential that phonology should be learned in context and not treated incidentally and/or separately. In addition to making decisions about content, grammatical structures, lexical items, functions, skills, methodology and materials, we need to identify phonological elements as well.

3. Native-like speech, especially for adult learners, takes time. For low level learners it is probably better to focus on the global aspects of oral production than on accuracy. (except in cases where inadvertent mispronunciations will cause embarrassment). A learner's intelligibility will not be affected if she substitutes one phoneme for another. For example, /dis iz di kæt/ instead of /ðis iz ðə kæt/. However, if she says the former with a rising intonation contour when her intent is to impart information, the listener will encounter some difficulty in understanding her meaning. While all ESL learners want to be understood by others not all will want to sound like native speakers; psychosocial and individual factors will influence their attitudes and motivation to modify their accent.

4. Not all 'problems' will be at the level of production; some will be associated with perception. The techniques used, need to mirror the type of 'problems' the learners are encountering. A diagnosis of learners' spoken English will provide information as to the type of activities and techniques that will be required

5. Learners need to have some understanding of the role phonology plays in language learning. Learning will be enhanced if learners are included in the decision making process concerning the areas in which they would like to improve their speaking.

Where to begin

As indicated above, I believe that learners benefit from having some understanding of the pedagogical basis of classroom activities. Most learners understand the need for a focus on grammatical structures, lexis and particular content areas. The role phonology plays in ESL is not as obvious and needs to be explained. By introducing learners to some of the prosodic features of English learners can understand the reasons for activities used in the classroom. This knowledge also allows them to evaluate their own progress and provides them with strategies to use in communicative exchanges outside the classroom. With higher levels this presents few problems since learners have enough language to understand the concepts involved and to ask questions where doubts arise. With lower levels a different approach is required which includes simplified terminology and graphic and gestural representations. I will outline how this can be done with low level and more advanced learners

Example 1: Class: ASLPR 0+/ 1-

Step 1: Setting the context

Let's say you're teaching a unit of work on personal identification. You've introduced the relevant lexical items and grammatical structures using your preferred methodology. You want to introduce some prosodic features to learners. Word stress can be introduced in the following way. List the nationalities represented in the class on the whiteboard; make sure that they are grouped according to similar stress patterns. eg *Chinese*, *Vietnamese*, *Japanese*. Ask learners which part of the word sounds 'stronger, louder and longer'. Indicate what you mean by these terms; clench your fist for strong, raise your voice for louder and draw out an utterance for longer by exaggerating the *-ese* eg *ChinE-S-E*. Mark the stressed syllable. Make sure the learners understand that the symbol used is to mark the stress. Shift the stress onto another syllable to show how it alters the sound of the word. Use the grammatical structures associated with personal identification to illustrate some of the functions of intonation in English. Introduce them to the intonation patterns of Wh- questions and Yes/No questions at the same time; otherwise they may draw the conclusion that all questions in English are uttered with rising intonation. Make a list of both on the whiteboard.

> *Where do you come from?*
> *What's your nationality?*
>
> *Do you come from Afghanistan?*
> *Are you from Afghanistan?*

Ask learners to listen to both types of questions and whether the voice goes up or down at the end of the question. Mark with appropriate contour. Demonstrate with arm movement; make sure your arm moves from right to left. Now show how the intonation changes in question-answer routines:

What's your nationality?	*Are you Chinese?*
I'm Chinese.	*Yes, I am*

Use the same question-answer routines to show how pitch variation indicates the speaker's attitude, status or mood. Utter the routines in a sad, happy, friendly, superior, surprised, angry and tired way. Ask learners to indicate how you feel about what you're saying. *Am I happy?* etc. Through these activities the learners now have some idea of the role phonology plays in spoken English. Tell them that they'll be doing activities to help them improve their speaking throughout the course.

Step 2: Diagnosing learners' spoken English

The phonological features you focus on need to be related to the 'problems' the learners are encountering. By collecting data of the learners' general speaking habits you can identify individual learner 'problems' and those common to the group. Collect samples of learners' speech; either on cassette or video. For the first analysis it is probably least traumatic for the learners if you collect a monologue of learners speaking about themselves for one minute. At a later date you can collect spontaneous samples of dialogues between learners. Devise a one page diagnostic learner profile with the following headings: clarity, speed, loudness, breathing, fluency, voice, gestural expressions, eye gaze, intonation, stress rhythm, consonants and vowels. Diagnose learners' speech according to these categories. I have found Firth's (1987) diagnostic profile particularly useful for determining those elements which reflect the needs of the majority of learners in the class.

Diagnostic profile

Suprasegmental level

1. General speaking habits
  a Clarity. Is the learner's speech clear?
    Are there instances where there is a breakdown in communication?
    What are the major factors?
  b. Speed: Does the learner speak too quickly?
    Is her speech unintelligible because she speaks too quickly?
  c. Loudness: Does the learner speak too softly?
    Does the lack of volume affect intelligibility?
  d. Breathing: Does the learner speak with appropriate pauses, breaking each utterance into thought groups?
  e. Fluency: Does the learner speak with either long silences between words OR with too many 'filled pauses' (ie. ah .... ummm)
  f. Voice: Is there enough variation in pitch?
  g. Eye Gaze: Does the learner use eye gaze behaviour appropriate to the context. eg facing a conversational partner or looking at the audience if delivering an oral presentation.
  h. Expressive behaviour: Does the learner overuse gestures? Does the facial expression match the utterance?

2. Intonation
  a. Is the learners using appropriate intonation patterns in utterances? Can the learner use intonation contours to signal whether utterances are statements, lists, wh- or yes/no questions?
  b. Is the learner changing pitch at the major stressed words?

3. Stress and Rhythm.
  a. Word level stress
    Does the learner produce the schwa in unstressed syllables?
    Does the learner use loudness and length to differentiate between stressed and unstressed syllables?
  b. Sentence level stress
    Does the learner stress each syllable equally?
    Is she able to produce appropriate strong and weak stresses?
    Are lexical words stressed and ungrammatical words unstressed?
    Does the learner place the tonic stress on the appropriate words?
  c. Linking
    Is the learner linking words appropriately? Are identical consonants linked eg top position?

Are vowels linked eg pay up? *Are consonants linked to vowels eg* top of ?

Segmental level

Consonants

- *a.* *Substitution. Is the learner substituting one phoneme for another?*
- *b.* *Omission: Is the learner omitting consonants?*
- *c.* *Articulation: Is the consonant being articulated properly eg. Is /p/ aspirated word initially.*
- *d.* *Clusters. Are consonant clusters articulated properly?*
- *e.* *Linking: Are consonants linked to each other?*

Vowels

- *a.* *Substitution: Is one vowel being substituted for another?*
- *b.* *Articulation: Is the learner articulating vowels correctly? eg lip rounding*
- *c.* *Length: Do vowels have their appropriate length?*
- *d.* *Reduction: Are vowels reduced in unstressed syllables?*
- *e.* *Linking: Are vowels properly linked to other vowels across word boundaries?*

After you have analysed the data you can identify the problems common to the majority of learners and you can provide feedback to individual learners. You now have to make some decisions concerning what can you achieve in the time you have available, the areas that should be given priority, the source of the problems (eg. perception or production) and the type of activities that will help learners improve their oral production How you determine teaching priorities will largely depend on where you perceive the problems to be. For example, some teachers might feel that accuracy is important and therefore might focus more on the segmental level; others might feel that the learner's overall intelligibility is more important than the correct articulation of particular phonemes. Personally, I think that with lower levels the focus should be on improving the learner's intelligibility. That is to say, to focus primarily on the suprasegmental level. If a learner's intelligibility is affected because her volume is too low then it doesn't really matter how she articulates a particular phoneme. The listener will eventually tire of the strain of trying to hear what she is actually saying and the communicative exchange will suffer as a result. Where the articulation of particular phonemes are causing the learner 'problems' then these should be dealt with in context. For example, the way in which /p/ is articulated depends its occurrence with other phonemes. Consider, /p/ in *pin, spit, upper, captain* and *topmost.*
Activities that help the learner to perceive and produce utterances should be given equal weighting. Activities that deal with perception of the input enables learners to process the information they are hearing. Between perceiving aural input and the production of output learners need time to filter, assimilate, recognise, fix, store, and structure information. In order to process the information learners need to hear the auditory input many times to enable them to do this.

On the basis of your decisions provide feedback to the students. Again this needs to be done in a simplified manner. Tell students that different languages have different 'music'. Ask representatives of the different language groups in the class to say something. Students listen to the different music. You will show them how to learn the music of English. Outline some of the areas common to all learners.

Step 3:
Selecting the content

Learning is enhanced when the learner is involved in the decision making process and the content of courses is directly related to their immediate needs and context. For these reasons I believe it is prudent to not only diagnose the learners' phonological 'problem's' but also the communicative contexts where they use English outside the classroom. With lower levels this can be done in the following way........Introduce learners to the notion of neighbourhood. On the whiteboard draw pictures of where you talk to people in a typical week, eg School, bank, library, Post Office, tram, home, swimming pool etc. Rub out. Ask learners to draw a picture of where they use English in their neighbourhood. Give them 3 minutes. Draw a happy, sad and neutral face on the whiteboard. Ask learners to draw in the face that matches their feelings in each situation. In pairs, ask learners to 'discuss' similarities and differences in their drawings and why they feel this way. Move around and talk with each student, note down their comments. Collect drawings and note those contexts where the learners indicate they are unhappy. Provide feedback to learners. 10 people were unhappy using the telephone, 9 at the bank, 8 at the Post Office, 6 at the DSS, 7 using public transport , 1 at the bottle shop and 1 at the cinema and so on. Ask learners to vote on those areas they would like to be covered and in what order. Tell learners that in the next few weeks you will cover these topics and ask them to do activities that will help them to understand and produce utterances in these contexts.

At this stage you have introduced learners to some of the phonological features of English, diagnosed their spoken English and ascertained those contexts in the community where they wish to improve their language. How does this all relate to the lessons you plan?

Step 4:
Incorporating phonology into ESL lessons.

You've established that the majority of learners have problems with stress and rhythm and intonation patterns. They've indicated that banking is a topic they are interested in. You select relevant material for the level you're teaching. I will outline how a lesson (series of lessons or session, whatever applies) might proceed using Unit 28 An Interesting Discussion from Corbel (1985) *Using The System.* The conversation in this unit is about a woman called Judy who withdraws money and then asks to see the manager about a loan. The function involved is making polite requests, the notion is banking systems, the grammatical structures include question forms, *will* used as future marker and *would* used as a request, the lexical focus is on numerals. Given you're diagnosis you decide that the phonological objective for this unit will be how to make polite request, using the appropriate stress patterns and intonation contours.

Procedure

Review stage:

Let's assume you've completed the initial steps of the lesson: communicative activities such as matching the title with the picture, predicting what the conversation will be about, listing names of banks and so on.

Perception stage Learners have picture of Judy and the teller in the bank.	
1. Learners look at the picture again *Which bank is Judy in?* *What's she doing?* *What time is it?* *What day is it?* Think about it silently for one minute Group discussion In pairs, look at the picture while the tape is playing. One person points to Judy when she speaks, the other to the teller when she speaks. Provide model for activity. Learners to change roles.	Structuring pause. Shows you that learners have associated the correct voice with the appropriate Different cultures attribute different characteristics to pitch and tonal variations. If learners miscue first time can self correct the second time around.
2. Listen again to tape, this time half the class raises their hand when Judy speaks, the other when the teller speaks. Each half changes roles. *Think about the people speaking, how old are they, what do they look like etc.* *Who speaks first, Judy or the teller?*	Teacher can SEE if students have recognised the appropriate voice and character. Structuring pause.
3. Give out sheet as outlined below. Teller: Judy: Teller: Judy: Teller: Judy: Students are to listen and draw a continuous line to match the length of the utterances they hear. Provide model of what is required. *eg. How do you want the money?* *Ar, a fifty, two twenties and a ten* Play the tape again to allow learners to check their work. Listen again, this time for the intonation contours each time the person speaking takes a breath. Provide a model. eg. Judy:________ ______________. Listen again, this time mark in where the speakers pause. Teacher provides model. eg. ___________ _____________. Listen again, mark where stressed words occur in the utterance. eg. ___________ _____________. Learners compare their work with a partner.	Develops knowledge of utterances length. Provides visual representation of the auditory input. Useful for developing appropriate breathing patterns Develops awareness of function of intonation curves. Falling intonation for statements. Rising intonation for yes/no questions and rise/fall patterns for Wh questions Focus here is on pauses in utterances. Develops awareness of organisation of thought groups Here the focus is on stress patterns. Learners identify the words that are stressed and which word has the most stress (tonic) in the utterance Move around groups and check learners work to gain an idea of where difficulties are occurring, will give you can idea of where further work is needed and highlight those where difficulties will occur at the proudction stage.

4.	*How do you think the teller feels?* *How do you think Judy feels?* *How do you know?* *What sort of gestures would both use?* *Show me for the teller.* *Now show me for Judy.*	**Relates the way in which people are speaking to the way they feel** Develops knowledge and use of appropriate body language. Helps learners to synchronise language with actions.
5.	*Take five minutes with a partner or in small groups to talk about banks in your country.* *What do they look like?* *Who works in them?* *What are the hours?* *How do you say these numbers in your language?* Write 10, 20, 30, 50, 70, 90 & 100 on the whiteboard. After learners have said these numbers in their own language, ask where the stress occurs in English.	Structuring pause. Allows learners to have break from concentrating. A freer type of activity allows them to be creative and active in a different way All learners can succeed in this activity
Production		
6.	Listen to tape and mouth utterances for each speaker. Change roles.	Chance for learners to mouth utterance without interference of vowel/consonant combinations.
7.	Hand out text. Allow learners to read silently. When learners have read text, play tape so that they can read the text while listening to it. Learners shadow the tape, ie. speak with the tape while it plays. Change roles. Learners listen to text and add appropriate gestures as they apply to utterances, eg. hand movements when teller counts out money.	Time for silent and individual work. Use tape and text together to minimise graphic interference.
8.	Isolate requests and questions. *How would you like the hundred?* *I'd like to see the manager.* *What was it about?* *Would you like to wait or come back?* *How long will he be?*	Useful to place stress markers, pause and intonation curves on text on an OHP. Focus on the intonation patterns. Shows that a request need not always be in question form.
	Provide half the class with a prompt eg. *hundred*, they ask the other half *How would you like the hundred?* as if they were: a. sad b. happy c. angry d. tired e. superior	Show that there are a variety of responses to the same request. Allows learners to be creative
	The other half responds accordingly. Indicate the role volume , pitch variation, breathing and speed play in showing attitude and status of the speaker. Demonstrate how gestures are also related to attitude and status of the speaker/listener.	Different emotions/attitudes are signalled by changes in pitch and volume levels. Breathing patterns also change as do the gestures and facial expressions
	Handout strips with prompts on them, eg. like *hundred* for *How would you like the hundred?*, *fifties* for *Two fifties please.* Learners walk around saying their	Allows you to check learning and it's fun.

	utterance until they find their respective partners. When all learners have found their pairs they stand in circle and have learners repeat the request-answer couplets. Class comments on whether pairs are grouped correctly or not. Change pairs if and where necessary.	
9.	Teacher and learners discuss what happens in the text. *First,* .... *Then,* .... Learners work in groups. Discuss any problems they encountered with grammar, phonology, or cultural aspects associated with the text. Teacher moves round the group.	Structuring activity. Allows for learners to reflect on lesson content and to check any doubts they many have. Another way to check that learners have understood basic ideas in text.
10.	Discuss whether Judy will get the loan. How much? Follow up activities could include a word find for lexical items, a comprehension exercise, a reading activity, a fill the gap exercise or a role play.	Focus for next unit.

There are numerous other techniques that can be used. These were just a few to illustrate how some prosodic features can be incorporated into lessons. They derive from the Structuro-Global Audio Visual (SGAV) approach to language learning. For further discussion see *All's Well 1 & 2 Teacher's manuals* (1976, 1977) or contact the SGAV Association, Sydney.

I will now outline how the same approach can be used with a higher level.

Example 2: ASLPR 2,

Course length 5 months.

The same procedure is used only it can be more complex as the learners have more language.

Step I: Set the context

1. Show a video of a short communication exchange. After viewing, ask them what the participants were talking about and how they felt. Then ask them how they deduced these facts. Introduce the notion that it is not so much 'what you say but the way and why you say it.' Using the utterances from the exchange on the video introduce the terminology of prosodic features of English. Include stress, rhythm, intonation, pitch and loudness. To introduce the terms ask the following questions:

Which words/syllables were spoken with more effort by the speakers?
What do you notice about the words that are not spoken with effort?
Did the speaker's voice go up or down at the end of the utterance ?
If there was a pause during the utterance what happened to the speakers' voice?
Was there any variation in the speaker's voice during the exchange? If so, where did it occur and why ?

Their answers can be graphically represented on the whiteboard using utterances from the video. Stress can be represented by using a dash over the stressed syllable. Stressed syllables are louder ,longer and produced at a higher pitch than unstressed syllables. Show this as outlined in the section on low level learners. Introduce notation for marking unstressed syllables. Pitch variation can be introduced by using a musical metaphor. Explain that just as music goes up and down the scale so too does our speaking. Draw three lines, call them keys. There are three keys : high, middle and low. We usually use the middle key for normal speaking; when we are speaking with friends or with others we consider as equals. However, if we want to convey other attitudes about the topic or person we are speaking to we change the key to reflect those emotions. Think about what happens when you are angry. What happens to your voice? Depending on how you get angry; it can go up a key and the speed at which you speak increases dramatically. Conversely it can go down a key and become almost a whisper and the rate will slow down considerably. Changing keys in conversations also signal status. Imagine the Prime Minister trying to convince one of his Cabinet ministers to change her mind about a policy. Because the Prime Minister is the dominant partner in the exchange he will signal this through using the high key throughout the exchange. Watch televised parliament for some examples of this feature. Conclude with the comment that languages vary in their use of these features.

2. Ask learners to say *Yes, I like learning English* in their own languages. As each language group does this, ask the other learners to comment on how similar and /or different each of the utterances sounded. The purpose of this activity was to attune students to the differences between their language and English. It is also to highlight that they will not all encounter the same sort of 'problems' which would explain why some learners might appear to be 'better' speakers than others.

3. Give each language group a handout on phonological differences (both suprasegmental and segmental) between their language and English which they are to read and discuss amongst themselves. Having set the context, outline how phonological elements can be incorporated into the syllabus, ask students for their opinions.

Step 2: Propose an approach along the following lines:

1. Teacher diagnoses individual learner oral production. Give learners an example of the phonological diagnostic profile outlined earlier and discuss each category. Teacher suggests learners speak about themselves, or any topic of their choosing, on video for a minimum of one minute. Teacher will comment on learners' spoken English on the basis of handout and highlight two areas that need attention. ie, where the strategies the learner is using makes him/her unintelligible.

2. Teacher's analysis of learner's oral production would be discussed on individual and group basis.

3. Learners write teacher a personal letter outlining how they feel about their spoken English and where they would like to improve. Teacher will select topics and medium to be used on the basis of learner's comments. Learners accepted the proposal.

Here are some of the comments learners made in their personal letters.

When I first came to Australia, eight months ago, I had a few problems understanding the Australian accent. But the big problem was when I wanted to speak. I was so embarrassed and so scared that even though I knew what to say I couldn't open my mouth, or if I said, I was making mistakes.[....] There is something else I have to get used to with now, and that is speaking on the phone. I can talk to anybody I have never spoken to before, I can fix appointments or interviews throw [through] the phone, as long as I am by myself in the room; when someone else is in the room and I have never spoken on the phone with that person, I can't do it, my voice is trembling, I have problems breathing and I sound very stupid.

I have come across too many difficulties which regards to my volume and speed as I think my English volume is too low and my speed is too fast. But during the last three months I got some Australian born friends and the amazing thing is that I don't have a problem while I'm around with my friends. But when I go some public places - for instance - shopping I find some discommunictate problems so how can I overcome these misunderstandings?

I am so happy that you are going to help us with our pronunciation. Here I would like to tell you something about my English speaking. I had come across of my problem in speaking with people at public and my friend and also at the shopping centre or other shop. When I was talking to them I also have to do some actions to show them what I want. Like what I want to buy something, where I can get it or I want to cook something, what should I put.

Learners were given their profiles and these were discussed individually and as a group.

Step 3: Plan a series of lessons based on learner data.

Content was chosen on the basis of learners' expressed needs. These initially included telephone and interview skills, casual conversations and expressing opinions in a polite, mildly impolite and aggressive manner. As indicated in the lesson outlined above, the type of phonological elements focused on in each lesson depended on the their appropriateness to the topic or activity. For example, rise-fall intonation patterns for tag questions were dealt with when the function involved was initiating a conversation with a stranger as in *It's a beautiful day, isn't it?*. The fall-rise and the rise-fall intonation pattern in tag questions were contrasted when the listening activity involved speakers expressing agreement and/or doubt. While each lesson highlighted a particular aspect; those dealt with in previous lessons were continually reinforced in each lesson, as was the case with grammatical structures, functions and lexical items.

Midway through the course the learners were shown the video recording made at the beginning of the course. They were asked to indicate those areas where they thought their oral production had improved. Learners were asked to comment on each other's progress. They were able to be quite explicit about their own progress as well as their peers'. *X 's speaking is much better now ,she stresses the right words. Before Y use to speak too quickly, now we can understand what he is saying.*

By the end of the course, learners had a good working knowledge of syllable stress patterns, schwa, sentence stress and rhythm, tonic stress, weak forms, linking, the function of rise-fall, fall-rise intonation patterns and how these patterns combined in utterances. They felt confident that they could use the strategies learned and apply them to situations where misunderstandings might occur in the wider community. As a consequence they were more confident speakers. Rather than describing a lesson in detail I will outline how learners prepared for a Stage 3 competency: delivering an oral presentation.

Procedure:

1. In the lead-up lessons, learners were asked to research a topic of interest. Library visits were organised so that they could locate information on their topic. They were asked to write assignments. I will not outline how this was done as the focus in this paper is on oral production.

2. The learners were shown the performance criteria for delivering an oral presentation and these were discussed with them.

3. They were to make notes from their written assignments. Their talk was to have an introduction, main body and conclusion. They were asked to weight the talk in the following way; 15% to the introduction, 60% to developing the topic and 25% to the conclusion. They were then given a handout showing the difference between Spoken Academic English and Broad Australian English where the authors were speaking about the same topic. How did the speakers weigh

their talks? In groups, they discussed other differences between the two extracts. These included: choice of appropriate lexical items (*Australians* vs *Aussies*), use of attention getting devices (*Look, it's like this* vs *It seems that*...), and use of contractions vs full forms.

4. To focus on phonological elements they were shown a short excerpt of a video of a person from a current affairs show presenting an opinion on a subject. They were asked to analyse where and why the speaker used the pitch changes, how the speaker used pitch and pause to signal the end of a thought group, what sort of intonation patterns he used and where the tonic stresses occurred. They were then asked to consider: what sort of intonation contours they would be using for lists; for statements; which words they would be stressing and how they would vary pitch to maintain the audience's interest and so on. They were asked to go through their notes and handouts from all previous lessons where various phonological aspects had been covered. These aspects were revised and discussed.

5. Other features of oral presentations were also dealt with such as: maintaining eye contact with the audience, how to use props and the whiteboard, starting slowly and calmly and ways to overcome nervous body language that might appear.

6. Over a number of days the learners gave their talks. These were recorded and transcribed.

7. Learners handed back transcriptions of their talks. Copies of the tapes were made so that learners could work in groups of four. They were given time to read the transcripts. The transcripts were marked in the following way. Unintelligible words or phrases were circled; ^ were used to indicate where they had paused in an utterance, *S* stood for stress, *Gr* for grammar. Three areas where the learners' talk could be improved were specified eg. *vary pitch, organise utterances into thought groups , focus on stress and rhythm.* Using these comments as a guide, learners worked in groups and listened to each others talk on cassette. They commented on each other's talk. When they had finished their discussions they worked on their own transcripts. Teacher moved around each group discussing the comments on each learner's transcript. Encouraging comments preceded discussion of problematic areas.

8. At a later date learners gave another talk. Some chose another topic some spoke on the same topic but changed the content.

Conclusion

What I have attempted to present in this paper is procedural approach for incorporating phonological elements into an ESL syllabus. The process can be applied to any ESL context; it is not confined to an Adult ESL context. A Novel Study in a Secondary context could incorporate phonological elements in the same manner as outlined in the above discussion. Let's say one of the functions involved is expressing opinions about the novel. In addition to providing the learners with the appropriate grammatical structures to do this, one could also attune learners to appropriate phonological information. In the same way, direct speech in the text could be analysed. If a character says sarcastically *How will I ever live without you, you're my everything!* how would this be said? What would it sound like if the character was highly emotional and serious about what he was saying? If a video was used in conjunction with a text then further phonological work could be done on gestures, stress rhythm and intonation.

The focus on the suprasegmental level has been deliberate as it is my opinion that this is the area that causes most communication breakdowns between ESL learners and native speakers. Moreover there are numerous texts that are available for ideas on how to deal with 'problems' at the segmental level.

I strongly believe that in making learners aware of phonological concepts the learning process becomes more comprehensible and enjoyable for them. It's not only about putting s on plurals /s/, /z/ or / z/, or marking past events with past tense markers /t/ or /d/. By making learners aware of the role of phonological elements in discourse we provide them with a means for decoding and encoding meaning in exchanges; who the people are, what their perceived status is, how they feel about what they are saying, cues for signalling a change in topic, the status of the message: "I'm imparting information, you listen", "I'm asking you, answer me" or "I'm not sure about what I'm saying" and boundary marking "I'm finished", "I'm not finished yet". We provide them with a key to how the culture is articulated through language and how to use language. Without this key it is difficult to understand 'why and how' people convey their intended meanings.

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Conversation: What Are the Rules?

***Beatrice Head** explores conversation showing how its forms and functions are distinguished from other types of spoken language. She discusses the rules of conversation in English, showing how they can be taught and practised in the classroom, and what teaching materials are available.*

Introduction

Conversation can be defined as "a time when two or more people have the right to talk or listen without having to follow a fixed schedule, such as an agenda. In conversation everyone can have something to say and anyone can speak at any time." (Nolasco and Arthur 1987:5) However, this is rather misleading, implying that there are no rules to be observed, which is not so. Every language has more or less clearly defined forms to be followed in conversation, but native speakers are usually unaware of them; it is only when the rules are broken that we realise that they exist. Unfortunately, a thorough knowledge of these rules in one language does not ensure success in the conversation of another, or even in another register of the same language, because the norms of interaction are culture-specific. Applying the rules of one speech community to another can cause the giving and taking of offence where none was intended, whereas errors in syntax or pronunciation can be tolerated.

Functions

The functions of conversation may be transactional, where information is conveyed, anecdotes told, arrangements made, instructions given and so on. Here the rules are more explicit and so transactional speech is much easier to teach and learn than casual conversation, which is mostly interactional or person-oriented and essential for establishing and maintaining relationships. In these exchanges the rules are much less obvious. (*Ed note*: See Anne Burns' article in this issue.)

The transactional and interactional functions are often combined in conversations which begin and end in the interactional mode but have a transactional filling. This is particularly common in speaking to doctors, shopkeepers, taxi drivers or other service personnel.

Students should be made aware of the functions of conversation by listening to audiotapes or videos, noticing whether real meaning is being imparted, and if so, what it is. Sometimes there may be several functions involved, as in this statement to a waitress, *The music is rather loud*, which is clearly a complaint and an instruction rather than an objective description. In casual conversation the message is often indirect, especially if the speaker is unsure of the listener's response.

Topics - What Not to Talk About

Since casual conversation aims above all to make the participants comfortable, it is vital that they agree and avoid arguments or embarrassment. Therefore the topics must be uncontroversial and not too personal. Most cultures have taboos which cannot be discussed in polite society, such as intimate health problems, sexual matters, religion or politics. Questions concerning age, salary and marital status may be appropriate on first encounters in some cultures but not in others. Relying on our intuition is unwise because teachers cannot be familiar with all possible social situations. Slade's (1986) research into the topics chosen by three different groups of Australian workers produced some surprising results. The three groups in her study were:

(1) male factory supervisors aged 30 to 55, with no tertiary education.
(2) female hospital-kitchen supervisors aged 28 to 37, and
(3) one male and three female clerical workers aged 28 to 30, two with tertiary education.

Slade found that all three groups liked joking and sending each other up, but it was not so direct or explicit in the third group. Personal anecdotes, especially amusing ones, were popular to varying degrees with all groups, and leisure or entertainment were discussed by all. However, the first group differed from the other two in not giving any personal information, not discussing what they had done or intended to do, and not chatting about others. In summary, the better educated white-collar workers had the widest range of topics even including illness and death, while the all-male blue collar workers were the most limited and impersonal.

These gender differences were also reported by Nolasco and Arthur (1987:11),

> Men. . . prefer it when there is a purpose for the conversation and they would rather talk about outside topics eg. games, hobbies, politics, cars etc. than themselves.

Some southeast Asians may be similarly reluctant to talk about themselves outside their families. Their reticence could then be seen as snobbery or unfriendliness by their female workmates.

Watcyn-Jones (1981) and Nolasco and Arthur (1987) contain many useful suggestions for conversation practice on topics designed to get learners to share their views on everything from books, babies and bad habits, to food, fears and family life. However, students should be warned not to embark on such subjects with strangers, and certainly not to ask direct questions like, *Are you afraid of death ?* or *Do you think children should always obey their parents and ask their permission to marry ?* Such controversial subjects can make for lively debate in the classroom and so break down the barriers to fluency, but they could have a disastrous effect on a neighbourhood coffee party or over lunch in the factory canteen.

The Jazz Chant entitled Personal Questions (Graham 1978:23) with the refrain: *I'd rather not say*, is an amusing way of making learners sensitive to what not to ask:

> *How much do you weigh? I'd rather not say.*
> *How much rent do you pay? I'd rather not say.*
> *How much do you make? I'd rather not say.*
> *Why aren't you married? I'd rather not say.*
> *Why don't you have children? I'd rather not say.*

Perhaps the only topic that is safe in any situation is the weather, which is therefore a popular opening gambit.

Vocabulary - Taboo Words and Euphemisms

The problem of what not to say applies to individual words too, especially those connected with taboo topics. In situations where such things cannot be avoided, as when dealing with doctors, nurses, counsellors or funeral directors, we sanitise our vocabulary by replacing the short Anglo-Saxon words that have obscene or shocking connotations, with longer professional sounding terms derived from Latin, or with genteel euphemisms or coy nursery talk.

The old taboo words are now used mainly for emphasis, abuse, or to express any strong emotion, usually quite unrelated to the original meaning. In some circles, words like *bloody* and *fucking* are so common as to have lost all power to shock or emphasise, and they are almost as involuntary as a stammer or tic.

Another category of taboo vocabulary comes from Christian ritual where they are seen as holy, but when used outside this context they are swear-words, and have no meaning except to vent feelings like surprise, annoyance, anger or fear.

Learners who have acquired English conversation on the factory floor, the building site or even from their teenage children, may not realise that certain commonly used taboo words are most inappropriate at parent-teacher meetings, or with employers, government officials, priests and so on.

Nonverbal Behaviour

Even when learners choose suitable topics and vocabulary, they can still fail to communicate satisfactorily if unaware of the norms of nonverbal behaviour, which conveys more than 65% of all communication, and is often more convincing and honest than speech because it is less conscious. When nonverbal behaviour seems to contradict the spoken word, we tend to believe our eyes rather than ears, and that is why it is easier to get out of verbal mistakes than body language mistakes. The most important nonverbal behaviours are as follows:

1. Kinesics or body language, including posture, stance, hand gestures, head movements, facial expressions, eye contact and so on.

2. proxemics, the distance between speakers and any body contact such as shaking hands, hugging, kissing and so on.

3. paralinguistic features including volume, intonation, stress, pauses, laughs, coughs and so on.

The possibilities for misunderstandings in this area are infinite. A few examples which could offend Australians are: failing to make regular eye contact, standing too close, touching too much, bowing, shouting, giggling or smiling inappropriately.

Different cultures express emotions to varying degrees, and so the "Asian" smile can be a mask to hide feelings like anger, embarrassment, failure or grief, which may not be shown in public. However, to Australian eyes this "inscrutable" smile often seems insensitive, stupid or sadistic.

It is likewise all too easy for Australians to give offence when they inadvertently show the sole of a shoe or foot to southeast Asians, innocently pat a Buddhist on the head, back away from a Latin American, offer food with the left hand, or turn their backs on someone.

Learners can be made aware of some of these crosscultural differences by watching videos of conversations, casual interviews or similar interactions. Nolasco and Arthur (1987: 58-59) get students to focus on body language such as: raising or lowering eyebrows, standing up straighter and visibly taking a breath. Students then discuss what each of these actions means or its effect on the communication. They could also observe facial expressions and eye contact, trying to identify the feelings they reveal.

A collection of cartoon faces like the one from *1000 Pictures for Teachers to Copy* (Wright 1984: 56, see 7A) can be used to compare which emotions may be openly displayed in various cultures, and so students will become more sensitive to what is acceptable in Australia.

Forms of Address

Forms of address are highly conventionalised and may be very different here from what second language learners are used to; for example, it is unthinkable in many cultures to address teachers by first names, and so students often call us *Teacher* or *Mrs*. However, such a linguistic mistake cannot be regarded as insulting. A sociolinguistic error, on the other hand, would involve the use of a linguistically correct form to the wrong person and is likely to be interpreted as offensively cold or over-familiar, as the case may be. Sociolinguistic rules vary considerably by region and social class, and when in doubt as to how to address people, it is quite safe to no-name them. With the increasing use of first names, it is important to explain to students that this usage does not imply intimacy or superiority on the speaker's part, and that Australians commonly use reciprocal forms of address.

Address between men and women in public contexts often reflects power differences and women, like children, can be addressed in public with conventionalised intimate forms to a far greater extent than is permissible to men. Terms like *mate* and *sport* can usually only be used by men to men or boys, and conventionalised endearments like *love, dearie, darling* are only used publicly, by most men, to women or girls; but our male students should not be encouraged to adopt such colloquial forms, and the females should not feel offended if they are addressed in this way.

Learners can notice various forms of address on TV, radio or tapes, as well as eavesdropping on conversations in public. Nolasco and Arthur (1987:73-75) list eleven statements about polite conventions and forms of address for students to evaluate and discuss

Register

Appropriate forms of address are part of the register or tenor of communication, and the Earl of Chesterfield's 1747 advice is still good: "Take the tone of the company you are in". Therefore the degree of formality in syntax and pronunciation will depend on the social situation, and the same topic, for instance, your son's chicken pox, will be treated differently depending on whether you are talking to his doctor, schoolteacher, or a good friend.

Aussie Talk and *Coffee Break* have useful recorded conversations to enable learners to study the registers of casual conversation, but these exercises are vital only for listening comprehension, and not necessarily for our students to reproduce themselves.

Openings and Closings

Opening and closing conversations can be hard enough for

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native speakers. Second language learners can experience additional problems, such as not recognising the standard formulae, or using abrupt, inappropriate expressions such as *I want to go now*. However, the devices for opening and closing different conversations are very similar. Many conversations start with adjacency pairs designed to attract attention, such as:

A. *Have you got a light ?*
B. *Sure.*
A. *Gosh it's hot in here today.*
B. *I'm used to it.*

In polite exchanges in Australia the most popular openings deal with the weather or health:

A. *Hello, how are you ?*
B. *Hi, how're you ?*
A. *Awful weather we're having.*
B. *Yeah, never stops raining.*

Many second language learners use openings that make them sound too direct and intrusive, or they close with a sudden *I go now*, or *Goodbye*, before negotiating the end of the conversation to ensure that no one is cut off in their prime. Native speakers can afford to break the conventions and take short cuts, especially with old friends, but this is not advisable for learners.

To make students aware of these opening and closing routines, they should listen to taped conversations and then practise similar dialogues in class. They should notice that transactional exchanges always open and close with some interactional formulae, and these can be acted in roleplay exercises such as those suggested by Bardovi-Harlig and others (1991:15) between two people waiting for a bus, a shopper and a cashier at the supermarket and so on.

An American-English closing must have a terminal exchange like:

A. *All right. See ya.* B. *See ya later.*

but it usually has a pre-closing exchange, where the speakers verify that the conversation is finished:

A. *All right.* B. *O.K.* (pre-closing)
A. *So long.* B.*See you later.* (terminal exchange)

Arrangements are often repeated in closings e.g.:

A. *O.K. Thank you very much.*
B. *All right.* (Pre-closing)
A. *Now I have to go to French* (arrangements)
B. *All right. Goodbye.*
A. *Bye-bye.* (terminal exchange)

Additionally, the topic may be shut down before the pre-closings, like this:

A. *Yeah, well, next time we come up, um ... I'll bring our set and ... you can go through 'em and pick the ones you want.*

Many texts mislead learners by providing incomplete closings, and so learners' pragmatic awareness needs to be developed by reading and roleplaying these dialogues in class so that everyone can distinguish between the incomplete and more felicitous closings. Another amusing activity suggested by the same authors (1991:13) is a conversation between two friends, one of whom wants to end the dialogue politely but promptly, while the other wants to prolong the talk. A competitive element can be introduced by setting a time limit, and having several pairs perform the roleplay, so that the class can then compare and discuss the performances.

Speech Acts

Compliments

There are formulae for many other speech acts like inviting, accepting, refusing, thanking, apologising, complimenting, commiserating and so on. The problem with all these interactions is that they are culture-specific, and learners may be regarded as effusive, insincere or forward if they overdo the politeness. On the other hand, if they avoid these courtesies, they will seem cold and unappreciative. As it is impossible to teach all the necessary speech acts for all the common situations, teachers must sensitise their classes to crosscultural differences, and stimulate students to develop pragmatic awareness. For this purpose Holmes and Brown (1987:525-527, 544) provide examples of compliments and responses, apt as well as inept, for students to evaluate and discuss:

1. *Hey, what's the occasion ? You look really nice today.*
2. *You are wearing a very lovely dress. It fits you.*
3. A. *What an unusual necklace. It's beautiful.*
   B. *Please take it.*
6. A.*What a big family you have!*
   B.*Yes, but it has its advantages too.*
7. A.*Your Chinese is very good.*
   B. *Oh no it's not, but your English is really very good.*

and *I like your new false teeth.*

Research on the commonest subjects of compliments in the USA and in New Zealand found them to be personal appearance, especially clothes and hairdos, and ability or performance, while compliments on personality and possessions were ranked far behind. Compliments tend to occur near the openings and closings, just after greetings or just before farewells, and are usually given to women of equal or lower status. The categorical constraint against the giving of appearance-related compliments to higher-status males, especially in work-related settings also applies in Australia.

Three patterns of compliments are:

1. *Your blouse looks really lovely.* (noun phrase + looks or is + adjective)
2. *I simply love that skirt.* (I + optional intensifier + like or love + noun phrase)
3. *That's a really nice coat.* (pronoun + is + optional intensifier + adjective + noun phrase)

However, sometimes compliments are not so unambiguous. Holmes and Brown (1987: 537) provide a useful activity to help learners distinguish between compliments which require thanks, and other speech acts which call for a different response. Students discuss the following comments and suggest a situation where they could act as compliments:

That's a neat bike.
I simply adore pavlovas.
That's a very nice thing to say.
You look cheerful.
We should do this more often.
I love fish and chips.
That's a good piece of work.
I really enjoy opera.
That car looks terrifically expensive.
This picnic was a very good idea.

Roleplays can easily be employed to practise compliments in context. "The Dinner Party" from *Storylines* (Fletcher & Birt 1983) could provide an amusing framework for all sorts of speech acts including greetings, invitations, making arrangements, compliments, apologies, commiseration, thanks, farewells and closings.

Apologies

Apologies are vital in maintaining good relations when things go wrong, as in the disastrous fish dinner mentioned above. The two commonest formulae here are, *I'm sorry* and *Excuse me*, which learners often use inappropriately and which even native speakers have difficulty in clarifying. The basic concern behind *excuse me* is "I have broken or am in danger of breaking a social rule" and the basic concern behind *I'm sorry* is "You are or you may be hurt". However, either of the formulae could be used in some situations. *Excuse me* is also a suitable opening for addressing strangers. *Excuse me. Have you got the time ?* And it is the usual way to ask for service. *Excuse me. Can I have the bill ?*

There are other remedial formulae such as the rather formal *I apologise*, and *Pardon me*, and *I beg your pardon*, but these last two are not so widely used here as in North America. With a rising intonation, the last one is understood to mean, *What did you say?* which is hardly an apology.

Kettering's *Interaction Activities* (1974 mimeo quoted in Paulston and Bruder 1976: 61-62) gives a useful list of excuses and apologies, followed by some practice situations, ranging from the structured,

A. *How was your vacation ?*
B. *Great. Hey, thanks for the postcards.*
A. *Sure. But I didn't get any from you.*
B. ____________________

to the unstructured:
You are in class and suddenly you don't feel well. – ________

Invitations

Invitations are another speech act which can create misunderstandings when learners fail to distinguish between a firm offer such as, *Would you like to join us for dinner on Saturday night ?* and a mere statement of good intentions like, *Let's have lunch together soon*. The very words which language learners might easily expect to carry the most weight, words like *definitely* for example, as in: *Let's definitely get together*, are dead give-aways that the invitation is not to be taken seriously. However, such statements can lead to negotiations for an invitation, if the potential host or hostess initiates them. In the case of shared expenses or other responsibility, among people of equal status, the arrangements are usually negotiated, as in this example (Wolfson 1983:76)

S. *Okay, thanks for the information. Let's get together soon.*
A. *I'd love to.*
S. *Good, I'll give you a call and we'll make a date for lunch.*
A. *If you want, we can make a date now. When are you free ?*
S. *Uh, okay, let's. I'm available almost any day next week. What about you ?*
A. *Well, Wednesday is my best day.*
S. *Okay, let's make it Wednesday.*
A. *Noon okay for you ?*
S. *Noon is fine. Shall I pick you up at your place ?*
A. *That would be great.*
S. *I'll be there at noon on Wednesday.*
A. *Great. See you then.*

Turns and Turn-Taking

I now want to discuss the strategies for taking turns, because conversation is a collaborative process. Speakers do not say everything they want to say in a single utterance. Conversations consist of a series of turns; at any moment the speaker may become the listener. Basic to managing conversation is the turn-taking system. Second language learners must learn to recognise when one speaker is finishing a turn so another can take it up, ensuring that the talk is fairly continuous, with only one speaking at a time. Cook (1989:117-118) says "The phrases, words and noises associated with particular turn types, as well as with the getting, holding and passing of turns may be taught quite explicitly", and provides the following list:

Taking a turn: *Yes, but; Well, yes but; Surely .....*
Holding a turn: *er; um; anyway; you know; I mean; sort of;*
Passing a turn: *What do you think ? tag questions eg. don't you ? isn't it ?*

Then there are subtler indications involving voice quality, intonation, elongation of syllables, pauses and body language. If these signals are not understood, and a learner mistimes his entry into a conversation, or is unfamiliar with the correct formulae, he can give the impression of being either pushy or too reticent.

Listeners are expected to encourage speakers by showing suitable responses such as surprise, approval, amusement, sympathy. Nolasco and Arthur have some useful suggestions for raising students' awareness of these techniques by observing them on video or audiotapes. Another exercise, "As I was saying .... " (1987:57-58) gives students practice in holding and taking turns, while a third person observes and describes the strategies.

Repair Strategies

Successful well-balanced conversations require the active cooperation of the participants, who must share the responsibility of keeping the dialogue going. Paltridge (1987:104) gives a good illustration of how *not* to do this:

A. ***Hullo. Where do you come from ?***
B. ***From Thailand.***
A. *How long have you been here ?*
B. *One month.*
A. *What do you do ?*
B. *I'm a nurse.*
A. *Where do you live ?*
B. *Glebe.*

He suggests activities to remedy the situation, first by making students aware of how unnatural and discouraging this question/answer pattern of conversation is, and then by extending these painfully short turns. A minimal response does nothing to keep the conversation going but even worse, it can be interpreted as a lack of interest in the speaker and the subject. To avoid giving a negative impression, learners must develop strategies to take more initiative in conversations. Paltridge (1987:107-108) has three ways to do it, which learners need to vary to avoid monotony:

1. When asked a question, answer it and ask a related question.
2. Answer the question, give some extra information and then ask a suitable question.
3. Answer the question, followed by extra information and/or a related question.

If the conversation becomes very unequal due to a failure of communication, other repair strategies are called for. Questions like *What do you think ?* or tag questions can encourage confused listeners to enter the conversation and admit their problem. The listener can repeat key-words with a rising intonation to ask for clarification. Paraphrase or circumlocution can also be used to overcome failures of communication, and approximations and mime can help speakers who are stuck for words. Meaningless fillers and other tactics can give some learners time to think.

Dornyei and Thurrell (1991: 19-22) offer some good ideas on how to make students aware of these strategies, which are used far more by native speakers than by second language learners. Listening to authentic conversations enables a learner to focus on such hesitation or delaying devices as, *Well, I mean, you know, actually, as a matter of fact, tell you what, anyway, you see*. Students can then pad out a skeleton dialogue like this:
A. *Tomorrow ?*
B. *Trip.*
A. *Where ?*
B. *Chicago.*

Other exercises can provide practice in avoiding giving information, changing the subject diplomatically, interrupting, and paraphrasing what another speaker has said. These devices will give learners confidence, facilitate improvisation skills and amuse and stimulate the class.

Conclusion

There has now been a wealth of research on the various forms and functions of conversation, and the strategies for coping with them. We also have plenty of excellent teaching materials, as well as highly motivated students eager to master the art of casual conversation. So why are we not more successful in this field ?

The problem, according to Cook (1989: 116), is that conversation, like body language, cannot really be taught, because of the inherent contradiction in terms. "The characteristic features of conversation include greater spontaneity and freedom, and a greater equality among participants than in other discourse topics. All these features are at odds with the nature of the classroom. . ." Even in classes where group or pair work is easy to arrange, we are still faced with the dilemma of how to teach students skills which are largely unconscious. Therefore it seems to me that conversation cannot be systematically taught, and can only be acquired very gradually by means of regular contact with native speakers, so that learners can incorporate more and more of the formulae and conventions which constitute the rules of conversation.

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Bringing the Outside World into the Classroom

***Rosemary Senior** describes how requiring students together data from the real world is a natural and effective way of developing speaking skills*

Introduction

The theme of this issue of ***TESOL In Context**, Teaching and Learning Spoken English*, highlights the essential irony facing ESL/EFL teachers: the fact that the spoken English which is assiduously taught within the four walls of the classroom may not necessarily be the spoken English which is learnt by students.

At the nerve-racking, real-life moment when students are required to engage in spontaneous conversation, it may well be that they produce fractured sentences, do not use appropriate stress or intonation patterns, fail to activate strategic competence skills and use inappropriate body language. Their teachers, in the meantime, having no way of monitoring these real-life encounters, will remain sublimely unaware of any crosscultural catastrophes which may have occurred. (It is obviously neither ethical not practical for teachers to spy on their students: following them onto buses and into shops, lurking behind strategically placed bushes or surreptitiously crouching at nearby tables in the canteen). Is there any other way in which students' communicative competence in real life settings can be both nurtured and, to some extent, monitored ?

A solution which I have come up with is one which works well with my current class, a group of foundation studies students from Asian countries (Indonesia, Thailand, Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei and Nepal) who need to improve their general level of English language competence prior to embarking on undergraduate courses. There is considerable variety in the level of English of these students, but they are united in their short-term objective: to pass the course and gain entrance to the university. My goal is rather more long-term: I wish these students eventually to become successful students within an Australian tertiary institution. I believe that for this to happen I must help my students to integrate gradually into Australian campus life. I think they must be encouraged to fraternise with Australian students as much as possible, so that they do not remain in isolated ethnic and cultural enclaves throughout their undergraduate careers. I also hold the view that, if my students have frequent verbal contact with native English speakers, their spoken English will naturally and effortlessly improve.

My interest in extending classroom activity outside the classroom is supported by current second language acquisition research. It is now becoming increasingly accepted that students should be exposed to language which is as authentic as possible. As Crawford (1990) says:

> The strong, experiential position suggests learners cannot develop an out-of-class competence if they are not given an opportunity to learn the variety of language used there.

She goes on to say that exposure to authentic samples of the language and participation in authentic discourse are essential parts of the learning process. She also draws attention to the limitations of the classroom as a milieu where genuine language can be practised, arguing that not only does the form of classroom language not reflect real-world use but neither do the functions to which it is put. From a different perspective Millen et al. (1992) explain that:

> Language can only be understood and explained (rather than merely described) in the context of its sociocultural communicative use.

These arguments have made me realise that it is not enough for me always to try to predict the language forms which I think my students will need when talking to Australian students on campus, and practise them intensively in class beforehand. Rather, I must sometimes make my students go *out* onto the campus and bring *back* observations about how the language is used, plus details of any problems which they have encountered. By discussing difficulties which have actually arisen (for example, a native speaker failing to understand what a learner of English was trying to say), students can see the necessity of improving specific aspects of their spoken English (in this case insufficient word stress may be the key factor impeding communication). Similarly, if students find that their interviewees will not stick to the point, they may need to concentrate on developing strategies which enable them to control the direction of their conversations more effectively.

My prime aim in sending students out onto the university campus or into the local community is, however, so that information which will subsequently be used by the class as a whole can be gathered. One problem with requiring students to do out-of-class work which does not follow the traditional homework format is that students frequently neglect to do it, under the assumption that, because it does not have to be handed in and marked, it need not be taken seriously. I make sure that my students understand, however, that the information which they bring back to class *will always form the basis of a subsequent classroom activity*, such as information sharing, a discussion of issues arising from the collected data, the writing of a summary of basic findings or the writing of a report. Once they realise that information gathering through interviews, surveys and polls is an integral part of the whole course, students become willing and motivated to do what is required of them - despite some initial moans and groans.

Interview Types

The types of interviews which can be conducted fall into three main categories:

1. One-to-one interviews, in which each student conducts a semi-structured interview with a native speaker and jots down notes. Topics for such interviews would depend on the focus of the class and interests of the students, but could include such topics as: the interviewee's daily habits/eating habits, the most exciting experience/ best holiday of the interviewee's life, the interviewee's family history and reasons for emigrating to Australia. If a goal of the course is the development of oral presentation skills,

then students can be encouraged to present their findings to the class as a whole.

2. Surveys in which each student must find out similar information from ten native speakers, and fill in a grid. Topics suitable for this kind of task include: a transport survey (how students get to campus each day, the time taken, difficulties encountered, etc.), a TV watching survey, or a housework survey. Initially the teacher can supply the interview grid, but later on the questions can be drafted as a class activity. Eventually the individual students can design their own grids on the topics of their choice.

3. Opinion polls, in which each student must gather a few yes/no answers from a larger number of interviewees, say 30 or 40. If the class is focusing on controversial topics, such as conservation versus development, using animals for medical experimentation, or voluntary euthanasia, then studying information gathered from polls can be a useful way of giving to the English language lesson an element of immediacy and concrete reality. Students can then be shown how to tabulate the findings, convert the numbers to percentages, construct pie charts and do general analyses of the findings in the appropriate academic genre.

Additional advantages to this method of encouraging fluency in English language learners include the fact that general confidence in communicating with native speakers is built up - and long-lasting friendships can even develop. Class cohesion is often enhanced, since students share with each other their successes and their blunders. Above all students develop the ability to negotiate meaning, by learning how to collaborate appropriately with their interlocutors: they learn to speak *and* to listen, so that each new utterance they make is a logical response to what has been said before.

No approach, however, is without its disadvantages and its pitfalls. Firstly, teachers must themselves be wholeheartedly convinced that what they are going to require their students to do is thoroughly worthwhile. They will need to sell to their students the reasons for, and long-term benefits of, performing these particular out-of-class tasks. They must be careful not to give their students tasks which are either too daunting or else too easy. (If students are issued with printed questionnaires with gaps, for instance, they may be tempted simply to hand the sheets over to their interviewees for completion, rather than asking the questions and filling them in themselves). Another corner-cutting exercise is for students constantly to approach fellow overseas students for information. Finally, care must be taken not to organise posses of students to stand in shopping malls and accost customers with inappropriate questions. Sensitivity and discretion will always be needed in the organisation of tasks.

Provided that these pitfalls can be avoided I am convinced that regular efforts on the part of EFL/ESL teachers to 'bring the outside world into the classroom' will improve the communicative competence of their students.

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Listening: Not Just Silence in the Classroom

In this article ***Alex McKnight*** *looks at listening and suggests a number of guiding principles for teachers.*

Introduction

In research into the learning and teaching of spoken language, listening has been the "silent" partner until very recently. Now renewed interest in the place of listening in second language acquisition has been sparked by researchers such as Krashen (1982, who have stressed the importance of comprehensible input in second language acquisition, leading to approaches such as the *Natural Approach* (Krashen and Terrell, 1983) which places great emphasis on listening comprehension before speaking. Although Krashen's central hypotheses have been attacked by other researchers as being ill-defined, vague or untestable (cf McLaughlin, 1978), many language teachers intuitively feel that his ideas have a great deal to offer the practising language teacher. Researchers who have not necessarily accepted Krashen's claims have nevertheless begun to consider the effect of input on second language acquisition (SLA). Input and interaction theories of SLA have led to increased attention to such matters as the modifications made in teacher talk to second language learners, and the effects of speech rates and pauses on comprehension.

At the practical level there has been attention given to the increasing numbers of NESB local and overseas students in English medium secondary and tertiary institutions and the concerns teachers and lecturers have expressed about the difficulties faced by these students in classes. In this context the problems of listening comprehension have come to assume a greater importance, and particularly in the United States, there have been increased levels of research into matters such as academic listening comprehension (Nicosia, 1988) and the relationships between students' notes and comprehension

(Dunkel, 1985; 1988a; 1988b; 1991). It is surprising that so little research has been carried out in Australia, but Clerehan (1992) is a recent example.

The Nature of Spoken Language

Some of the difficulties of listening can perhaps be best seen if we compare listening with reading. As we know from the work of Halliday (1985) and others, written text is normally highly organised, linear, economical and explicit. Spoken text on the other hand often appears to be disorganised, circular, highly redundant and the meanings are often implicit. In spoken text sounds may be weakened, run together or omitted entirely, leading to difficulties for NESB students. In written text punctuation plays an important role in signalling meaning, but in speech much of the meaning is conveyed by stress, intonation and rhythm. Interpretation of such signals by native speakers is a complex and subtle process, and the particular difficulties perception and interpretation of these features present for NESB listeners are often under-rated. Whereas written text can be processed at a rate decided by the reader, spoken text is controlled by the speaker, and the listener must process the input in real time, attaching meaning to chunks of input on a moment-to-moment basis in an ever-changing context as the discourse (conversation, news broadcast, lecture etc) proceeds. Furthermore, the listener often cannot back-track as is possible with re-reading the passage; this is particularly true in non-interactive contexts such as listening to the radio or TV or to lectures. Given all these features, it is not surprising that NESB listeners find concentrated listening an exhausting task.

How do we process language input?

There are numerous theories about language processing in the psycholinguistic literature, many of which are based by analogy on the reading process, on L1 listening, or on artificial intelligence. The applicability of the various theories to L2 listening has yet to be shown, and teachers need to approach the theories with a degree of scepticism.

Some theories assume that the smallest units of the input (the sounds) are recognised first, and are then put together to make words. Words are then put together to make phrases, phrases to make sentences and so on. Meaning is derived as a result of this linear, bottom-up processing and is entirely text-driven. These theories have become known as *bottom-up* processing theories (Fodor, Bever and Garratt, 1974).

Other theories have taken the opposite view, and have become known as *top-down* processing theories. These assume that meaning is derived from a matching of context and background knowledge to the incoming data to develop hypotheses about the message which are then confirmed or modified as the input is processed. These theories see processing as linear but driven by hypotheses about the data rather than the data itself. Schank and Abelson (1977) consider the role of prior knowledge in comprehension. *Schemata* or *scripts* or *frames* (Minsky, 1977) are the knowledge we have about particular typical situations and their associated participants and procedures. Our knowledge of scripts or schemas helps us to interpret much of the language we hear around us and saves processing time. We do not need to hear everything directed at us, nor does all the spoken input need to be explicit, because our knowledge of scripts and schemas allows us to fill in the missing information and infer connections.

Schema theory is helpful when we consider listening comprehension by native speakers. However, non-native speakers may lack certain culturally-appropriate scripts, or the scripts they bring with them from their mother tongue may not match the scripts or schemas assumed by native speakers (van Dijk and Kintsch 1983: 320-321) These differences will inevitably add to the difficulties faced by non-native listeners.

Other theorists reject both the bottom-up and the top-down theories as inadequate and see the processes involved in processing text as being complex, parallel and interactive. Difficulties in processing at one level can be compensated by strengths in processing at another level, and meaning is derived from a complex interaction of processes. These theories can be broadly described as *interactive* processing theories (Marslen-Wilson and Tyler, 1980).

What is comprehension?

Given that theories of processing are so diverse, it might be thought that at least the notion of comprehension is clear-cut. Unfortunately this is not so. As all teachers know, it is very difficult to know when something has been comprehended. A group of native speakers who have listened to the same spoken input will not necessarily agree on what was said or what was meant by it. When native speakers are asked to recall or summarise what they have heard or read, they recall the gist or the concepts expressed. They do not recall the exact words used in the original text, rather they recall the propositions expressed by the words (Clark and Clark, 1977:49). This is because the input passes through several different processes before it can be understood, recalled, or summarised, and many factors influence what is attended to, what is *understood*, and what can be recalled. These factors include at one level the listener's age, sex, background, and personality, the listener's interest or otherwise in the topic, and the listener's purpose in listening.

If we look into comprehension more deeply, we can see that many skills are required in gaining meaning from spoken input, ranging from the prediction of topic and content, the selection of relevant data and the exclusion of non-relevant data, the interpretation of gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice, the recognition of significant components of the input at phonological, syntactic and lexical levels, the combination of the significant elements into chunks for processing, and the interpretation of the discourse. The latter process requires taking into account all of the above factors, in addition to knowledge about the role, status, and attitudes of the speaker, the pre-existing background knowledge of the topic, shared knowledge, and the pragmatic rules of the particular interaction within the particular culture (for example, is it a casual conversation or a formal lecture?) Having processed all this input, which involves much more than simply processing what is heard, the listener provides an appropriate response, either verbal or non-verbal, by which the degree of comprehension can be checked. A good deal of research has been carried out on factors thought to affect listening comprehension, but relatively little on second language listening comprehension.

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Much of the research has been carried out on native speakers in experimental settings and the findings may not be applicable to the behaviour of NESB students in authentic listening situations.

Implications for teaching

Teachers may well be forgiven for feeling confused by the complexities of the listening process, particularly for NESB learners, but perhaps we can derive a set of principles about listening which best represent what is known about listening to this stage, and which may provide some guidance to teachers.

1. Listening is an active skill, not a passive one. Listening exercises should not lead only to the correct answer, but to appropriate behaviour or activities. Try to devise listening activities which require group work, discussion and problem solving.

2. Listening is selective. Encourage students to listen for gist, rather than aim at word perfect recall. They do not need to understand every single word in order to comprehend the whole text.

3. Listening involves prediction. Encourage students to activate their scripts or frames by discussing the topic of a listening text beforehand and asking them to predict what they may hear.

4. Listening is rarely an independent activity. Provide support of various kinds to the listening texts, for instance main headings, pictures, charts or graphs.

5. Listening is not reading. Do not use listening texts which consist of written language read aloud. Spoken and written texts vary in many ways and authentic spoken texts contain pauses, fillers, repetitions and other features which may provide processing time for listeners and therefore aid comprehension. Text prepared to be read aloud does not usually contain these features, and may present particular problems to NESB listeners.

6. Listening is not random. Encourage students to explore the various strategies used in spoken text by native speakers to signal key points in the discourse, definitions, explanations, summaries, conclusions and so on. These *signposts* can be very helpful to NESB listeners by reducing the processing time necessary.

7. Listening is not an autonomous skill. Link listening with the other macro-skills. We often know something about a topic before we hear the text because we have read about it beforehand or discussed it with friends or colleagues. It can be helpful to learners if the listening text contains some information already familiar through their reading, or from their background knowledge, as this can assist with the establishment of an appropriate frame.

8. Most importantly, listening should be taught, not just tested. Encourage learning through listening rather than testing through listening. Many listening activities which ask students to listen to a text and then answer questions are testing memory or recall and not really teaching. If you do set this sort of task, give the students the questions before the listening task, and do not insist on the exact wording of the original in the answers. If you have time to prepare them, short transcripts can be used with learners to allow them to check their own listening, and discover and discuss some of the ways in which sounds are modified or omitted in certain contexts, different ways in which speakers signal various meanings and so on.

Conclusion

NESB learners spend a great deal of their time listening and, while it can be demanding and exhausting, it is central to the learning of the target language. It is perhaps surprising that so little is known about the process of listening as it is so central, and some of the research is confusing or contradictory. However, although there remains much to be learnt, these directions for the teacher are clear.

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Talk: A Bridge to Learning and Literacy in the Classroom

Pauline Gibbons *shows us how talk can be a bridge to learning and to literacy in the multiethnic classroom when it is a systematic and integrated part of the program.*

Introduction

The importance of student talk in the language classroom has long been acknowledged. We know that language use is a major factor in language development and we know that it is a tool for learning: we grasp new understandings more easily by talking about them. And many would agree that a collaborative and interactive classroom is a more powerful form of pedagogy for minority groups, than is a traditional transmission-based classroom. In addition, as this paper will demonstrate, certain kinds of spoken language are a bridge into reading and writing.

Yet it is probably fair to say that in most classrooms the planning and programming of spoken language are not usually approached as systematically and with the same rigour as are reading and writing. And there are good reasons for this. Spoken language seems less predictable than written language, and in an interactive classroom, where there is a lot of student talk, the teacher's control over exactly what is being learned, and how it is being learned, decreases. It may be less easy for a teacher to see a direction and so it is harder to plan for in a way that is systematic.

This paper suggests a possible framework for planning spoken language across the curriculum. The framework is based on the *mode continuum*. In systemic linguistic theory this refers to the *variation* of language which occurs (in largely predictable ways) depending upon factors such as whether the speakers are in a face to face context, and talking about something they are doing, or whether the audience is unseen and the text is written, such as a formal report. To illustrate how language varies according to these factors, here are three texts related to the same topic. Text 1 occurred while three students were engaged in a hands-on problem solving activity, Text 2 was produced by one of the students who was asked to report back to the class about what her group had found out, and Text 3 was her written text on the same topic.

Text 1

A: *try this one...no it doesn't go...it doesn't move...*
B: *try that...*
A: *yes it does a bit...that won't work it's not metal...*
B: *these are the best...it's making them go really fast.*

Text 2

> *we tried a pin...a pencil sharpener...some iron filings and a piece of plastic...the magnet didn't attract the pin but it did attract the pencil sharpener and the iron filings...it didn't attract the plastic.*

Text 3

> *Our experiment was to find out what a magnet attracted. We discovered that a magnet attracts some kinds of metal. It attracted the iron filings, but not the pin. It also did not attract things that were not metal.*

It is clear from these examples that the language varies because the purpose and context in which it occurs has changed. In Text 1 the children are in a face to face shared context as they handle and discuss concrete objects. Consequently much of the language points to these things: to the children it is clear what *this one, that, these* are referring to. Since the context itself supports the meaning, the text is lexically sparse: there are relatively few content words because they are not necessary for communication in this context.

Text 2 illustrates the far greater linguistic demands placed on the speaker by the context. It refers to the same topic and occasion as Text 1, but it has moved in time and in space away from the original events being described: the children are now seated on the floor with the teacher and the science materials have been put away. The speaker no longer has the support of the immediate context and so has to rely on her linguistic resources to recreate what happened for the benefit of those who were not part of the experience. For example, she now has to name the objects (*pin, pencil sharpener, iron filings, plastic*) and refer to the process that was involved (*attract*). In addition reference is now internal to the text: (*it* refers to *magnet* within the text, not to something outside of the text).

Text 3 is even further removed from the original situation. In a written text even more is demanded from the writer, since it has to be understood by an unseen audience, (who cannot ask for clarification!) The text is decontextualised; it must stand alone, and provide all the information needed by readers who might have no idea of the original context. The writer here, for example, orients the readers by beginning with the words *our experiment was to.* Although the text is in many ways similar to a recount, (the writer is relating her particular experience - *our experiment, the pencil sharpener, we discovered*), there is also a generalisation, more typical of the impersonal writing of a science report: *a magnet attracts some kinds of metal.* And if we were to continue to move along this language continuum, as in this final text from a child's encyclopedia, we would find no personal elements. In addition, there will be a further increase in lexical density, especially that associated with the field or topic.

> *A magnet ... is able to pick up a piece of steel or iron because its magnetic field flows into the metal, turning it into a temporary magnet.*

How, then, can this variation of language - the mode continuum - be used as a framework for planning, and how is it especially relevant for second language learners? To answer these questions, an example of its application to the classroom is described below. The texts are taken from a group of year 4 children, all of whom are second language learners, within their normal mainstream classroom. The topic involved children in studying the movement of cogs and gear wheels.

Language accompanying action

In this text, the children are manipulating cog wheels of different sizes in order to discover the relationship between the size of the wheel, and the speed and direction in which it moves.

A: *like this*
B: *this one goes ... one and a bit more*
C: *twice*
A: *it goes once around and then it goes ... it goes a bit more because that one's got smaller ones ... that one's got less than that one*
C: *yeah this one went ... one and a bit more*
A: *it turns...in the opposite directions*
B: *the big wheel is move in clockwise...so what direction is that?*
A: *anticlockwise*
C: *anticlockwise*

Classroom situations involving the use of this language are characterised by the need to solve problems or find solutions. They involve children working collaboratively in small groups, often with hands-on concrete materials. For ESL students, such learning situations are very supportive. Because the context itself supports understanding, a student needs relatively few linguistic resources to participate as a full group member, and is able to make a real contribution to the group's thinking. Such genuine participation is rarely possible in a whole class situation. In addition the student has an opportunity to hear other children talking their way to understanding and articulating what is happening. In such contexts all children have opportunities to learn *through* language. A great deal of conceptual knowledge can be built up, with the concrete situation itself supporting this understanding. As the text above illustrates, there is also opportunity for peer teaching.

Reporting back to the class/interaction with teacher

The following text occurred in a whole class group with the teacher interacting with individual children.

Teacher: *What did you learn about movement when two notched wheels of different sizes fit together? Rhonda?*
Student: *that...when a big wheel and a small wheel are together and you move one wheel, the other wheel moves too*
T: *good, alright so ... one wheel...?*
S: *moves with the other*
T: *one wheel moves with the other... can anyone say that in another way? Sam?*
S: *the big wheel moves clockwise and the small wheel moves...anticlockwise*
T: *so they move in different...*
S: *in different directions*
T: *so you found they move in different directions. Nellie?*
S: *if you move the big one the smaller wheel moves faster*
S: *I found out that the bigger one has more notches than he smaller one ... and when you turn the big wheel once the smaller one will turn around ... like ...it will turn around one and a half times...because it doesn't have that many notches.*

Reporting back to the class gives children the chance to do what Bruner describes as 'looking back on your traces and telling yourself what you know'. It also offers opportunity for children to use longer stretches of discourse and to rehearse, with the teacher's guidance, ways of thinking and talking which are closer to written language. Note how much more complete the language is here, compared with the more fragmented utterances in the first text. Such contexts therefore provide a bridge between the unstructured face to face talk of the small group and the more formal demands of decontextualised written language. Without this bridge, there is a wide linguistic gulf between the concrete experience and any subsequent writing tasks. Asking the right question is important: closed questions to which a single correct answer is expected will not offer opportunities for children to use extended discourse.

For the teacher of ESL children a planned reporting back session also creates a time when new language can be modelled and children can be shown alternative ways of communicating their findings. The teacher's talk and her intervention at this point helps to shape the learning that occurred as they interacted in the small group. Her questions challenge the children within the framework of their current understandings, while at the same time she takes a leading role in helping them to use the appropriate language. In this text, this focus is quite explicit: '*can anyone say that in another way?* '

Since this context places demands on children to articulate their understandings, it also allows for learner language to be stretched. Unlike the first task, it produces a press on children to use language in a more sustained way, and as second language acquisition research suggests, it is often at this point of struggle with new language - when learners successfully attempt to go beyond the known - that steps in language learning occur.

As a further step along the continuum, children might be asked to prepare a more formal oral presentation to the class, incorporating in this additional information from written sources. A planned piece of spoken discourse is likely to approximate many of the features of written language, and can support subsequent more formal writing tasks.

The children in this class reflected very positively on the role of talk in their learning, and its role in helping them with later writing tasks. Here are some comments given in response to the question '*what helped you to write?*''

> *I discussed it with my group*
> *talking helped me*
> *I liked ...the other people...and I can hear their ideas*
> *it helped when we discussed*
> *it was easier because we learned about it ...like I knew a lot about it*

In relating learning activities to a range of points along the mode continuum, teachers can identify the kinds of tasks most relevant for children to develop both the conceptual framework and language of the field. Knowing a lot about it, as the child above points out, is very important for success in reading and writing. Planning along the mode continuum takes account of the role of spoken language in learning itself, and of its importance in literacy development. And a learner's increasing competence in using language can be recognised in her or his ability to move towards the more reflective end of the continuum and to use language successfully in decontextualised situations.

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TESOL Talk

Techniques for Developing Speaking Skills with Advanced Learners

***Lynette Bowyer** interviews **Kate McPherson**, who is a Language Instructor at TESOL Programs, University of Queensland, and a* QATESOL Newsletter *Editor. Kate has just completed her M Ed. (TESOL).*

LB: Could you begin by filling us in on your background ?

KMcP: I used to be in AMES in Hobart where I worked largely with refugees from South-East Asia, South America and Eastern Europe, in on-arrival and fast-track general English programs. I'm now working at TESOL Programs at the University of Queensland, largely with advanced level general English and EAP classes. My current students are mostly Asian but a few are from the Middle East and Africa.

LB: When did you become interested in the issue of speaking skills ?

KMcP: I've always been interested in that area of language learning. Maybe it started when I was in Africa and had to do a lot of group work because I had disparate classes and few materials. I was interested in what happened in the interaction in those groups as opposed to a teacher-fronted class. For the past three years as part of my study for a Masters in TESOL I've looked at speaking skills in group interaction, and at how error correction is used for speaking.

LB: Kate, in developing speaking skills are you approaching this from a micro-skill or from a macro-skill level ?

KMcP: I'm looking at both. I'm looking at as many task types as possible so that I can stimulate different patterns of interaction, but within that, focusing on fluency, appropriateness and accuracy.

LB: How do you actually undertake this ?

KMcP: I'll give you an example of a type of task I use. To focus on fluency we have a regular classroom routine at the beginning of many of our lessons. The students are asked to do short impromptu talks. I have a box crammed full of folded up pieces of paper with many different topics on them - anything from *chocolate* to *politics*, *Monday mornings* to *ambition*. They choose a topic and speak on it for one to two minutes, secure in the knowledge that they're not going to be picked up on errors in their pronunciation, structure and so on. They're just developing the ability to speak for a period of time on a topic.

LB: This reminds me of techniques used in teaching process writing where students undertake sustained writing for periods of time. Are there any other techniques you have used that might have been transferred from the teaching of writing skills ?

KMcP: In my writing classes I often get my students to keep a journal. We use that idea in the speaking classes by doing what's called *taped journals*. This idea comes from an article by Diana Allan in the *English Language Teaching Journal*. The students talk to me on tape for about five minutes - they talk informally about things that have come up in class, or future study plans, I listen to them and talk back to them on the tapes giving them comments on what they said but also focusing on the form of what they said. I'm giving them feedback as if it were a piece of writing.

LB: I see, so you're actually 'marking' it as you might with written work, although you have more scope for suggestions and comments, presumably, with oral feedback. Have you taken any techniques from other areas, aside from writing ?

KMcP: Yes, from my own research methodology last year, using introspective techniques as described by David Nunan with reference to teacher education. He described the use of *stimulated recall* where video recordings were made of teachers who later replayed them and introspected on their classroom teaching. I've taken that technique into the classroom by video recording group interaction and playing it back to the learners outside of class. I ask them to tell me why they were saying something and what is going through their minds at that time.

LB: And how do you think this helps students to develop their speaking skills?

KMcP: I think it helps them to develop skills in self assessment and self monitoring, because as with written work they're getting feedback on what they produce. That doesn't happen very often in speaking because speaking often gets lost; it's so transient. But when it's captured on video like this it's preserved for later. Then we can concentrate on the form of what they were saying and look at ways of improving it. It's less threatening doing it at that stage than when they are performing it in class.

LB: Do students actually view the video alone after class?

KMcP: They have two options. I've done it both ways. I've presented them with a video and explained what we will do with it. Then I've said if they like they can look at it alone, or if they like I can look at it with them, and talk to them about it. So far, they've taken it away and looked at it by themselves and then brought it to me and we've looked at it together. But I've found over a period of time that they haven't asked me to look at it as much. They go off and look at it by themselves. It's as if they are being weaned off my input.

LB: So this is also helping the students to be responsible for their own learning.

KMcP: Yes. It is building up that ability to do something by themselves, to self correct. In that sense it's a skill they can take with them after they've finished with us. But also we don't just focus on what they're doing "wrong"; we focus on the positive things, as well .... looking at what they *really have* mastered. I think that's really important for their motivation in their future studies.

LB: Can you describe any other tasks which you felt particularly motivated your students ?

KMcP: Yes, in fact this happened just a couple of weeks ago in class. Three students were engaged in a discussion and I was really impressed by the way they were handling it. So I asked if they would mind doing it for me later on video as I said I'd like to be able to keep it. I said they could look at it with me later. It was really interesting to see how they did it on the video. They videoed it themselves and when I played it back afterwards, I was very taken with how they'd carried out the task.....way beyond their original performance. They used much more clarification, more active listening skills and paraphrasing. They'd taken up the challenge to do a bit more this time, with the presence of the camera there.

LB: How do you think they were actually able to do this?

KMcP: To be honest I really don't know. Perhaps one reason might be that because they were now familiar with the content they could concentrate on how they actually said it. I'm not sure about that, but it would be interesting as a research topic to look into further.

LB: I want to look at textbooks shortly. Before we move on to that topic could you outline just one other technique which you have had success with ?

KMcP: I'm sure many other teachers ask their students to conduct surveys. The way I've done this with my class is to take the topics which have arisen from our reading or our listening tasks and ask the students to use them as the basis for getting more opinions on that topic, or to look at that topic from another viewpoint. The students design the survey themselves, formulating the questions themselves whilst working in groups with one or two other people. They're quite anxious to ensure that they have formed the questions accurately. It's something they want feedback on. They go out onto campus and collect opinions on the questions they have formulated, come back into class, collate their information, put it together drawing out the main trends from it, and present an oral report to the rest of the class. Because they have all been obtaining information on the same topic, everyone is interested in finding out what the other groups have discovered. So from that activity which integrates listening, speaking, reading and writing, they are able to develop skills in accuracy. They have to make themselves clearly understood outside of class, and then formally present their findings to their class group when they get back.

LB: So effectively, Kate, what you're doing with that task is developing speaking skills but in a more integrated way with other skill areas ?

KMcP: Yes.

LB: Changing the topic now, are there any textbooks which you have found particularly helpful for these speaking tasks ?

KMcP: There are two that I use a lot. One is in the Oxford Resource Books for Teachers Series - the one by Nolasco and Arthur called *Conversation*. In that one the section on feedback activities is particularly useful. The other one is called *Professional Interactions*, for students in the health science areas who are preparing for entry into tertiary studies. It focuses mainly on getting them ready to make class seminar presentations. That one is very useful and very, very popular with students.

LB: Would you like to make one final comment about developing speaking skills in advanced learners ?

KMcP: Just to recap on some of the points we have covered here...it's very important to maximise opportunities for a student to speak, so they can speak as often as possible; and that those opportunities encompass varied tasks, so that they are speaking in long and short chunks and not just in response to teacher questions; and that from this they are able to function out of the class, so they can take with them outside of class skills and approaches that they've learned.

LB: Thanks very much Kate. This has been a stimulating discussion, and I hope that your in-and-out of class activities continue to be as interesting and effective as they obviously are.

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TESOL Reviewer

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Into Speech Bilingually: An Individual Pronunciation Course for Vietnamese Learners/Đi Vào Cách Nói, Bằng Song Ngữ: Một Khóa Học Cách Phát Âm Từng Người Cho Các Học Viên Người Việt

Dell Macneil
Adult Migrant Education Services, Victoria, 1991
Teacher's Book $20, 200 pp
Nine Student's Books $15 per set, 20-29 pp each
Listening Tape Cassette $15

Reviewed by Tony Ferguson, Footscray City Secondary College, Victoria

This self-contained package of materials, developed as a Distance Learning Project, is intended for independent use by individual adult Vietnamese learners of English at home linked with a teacher through the Distance Learning program of AMES or in the Individual Learning Centres in AME Centres. The materials have grown out of Dell Macneil's action research study (1987, 1988) into the needs of adult Vietnamese learners of English and her development and trialing of activities to meet the identified needs in a number of AMECs in Melbourne.

The research study focuses particularly on the needs of speakers of tonal languages. (Vietnamese is one. Other tonal languages spoken by ESL learners in Australia include all the various Chinese languages - Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien, Teochew and so on - and Burmese, Thai and Lao.)

It was demonstrated long ago that many tonal language speakers' difficulties with final consonants and consonant clusters disappear when they learn to use English sentence intonation, rhythm and stress patterns rather than transferring the syllable-based tones of their first language, and particularly the high-rising tone to English. The kind of articulatory phonetic activities offered in Baker's *Tree or Three* (1983) become relevant only after students have learnt the intonation and stress patterns taught in what Dell Macneil later called the mini-course in suprasegmentals integrated into *Into Speech Bilingually*.

I had been studying *Crossing the Barrier* (Macneil 1988) and beginning to plan some activities for my ESL class when I came across *Into Speech Bilingually* . I had a group of seven 18-20 year old Vietnamese speakers and one Viet-born Cantonese and Mandarin speaker in a Year 10 class. The extent of everyone's vocabulary and their difficulties with listening comprehension, stress and certain consonants and consonant clusters seemed to indicate that their exposure to and interaction in English remained minimal, though they ranged from new arrivals to people in their third year in Australia. Much of their spoken English was unintelligible. Even when speaking freely and relatively fluently in English their intonation patterns were distinctively Vietnamese, making them hard to understand. No student was confident as a speaker or learner of English.

Dell Macneil's analysis in her earlier publications seemed to fit this group of students. Though my class consisted of young adults, Dell warned me that *Into Speech Bilingually* was not intended for students at the secondary level nor for classroom teaching purposes.

The material covers selected targeted material for tonal language and Vietnamese speakers on sentence-level intonation, stress, pause and linking features that carry meaning and together with fluency largely determine whether or not other people can understand their spoken English. It is very straightforward and non-technical, so the teacher can manage the material without a knowledge of the jargon of phonology. Similarly, the teacher does not need to know any Vietnamese. The course also integrates a judicious selection of key individual sounds for students to learn to articulate

correctly together with minimal pair discrimination activities. The sentences in the examples and exercises make sense and are simple enough for students to understand and they avoid, with one exception which you can make a joke of, some of the unlikely pairs which crop up in other commonly used pronunciation texts. Some minimal pair activities which affect meaning are accompanied by simple line-drawn illustrations.

It is very welcome to have a Standard Australian English pronunciation resource at this level, most commercially published materials being British or American [with the exception of Ann Baker's (1983) useful, but very limited book] to a degree which makes them unsuitable for teenagers and young adult learners in Australian schools and communities because the vowel sounds and some intonations are so different and because American spelling is different. *Into Speech Bilingually* reflects what our learners hear around them and gives them appropriate models.

The Preliminary Unit deals with the basic concepts students need to understand to use the materials: English alphabet, vowels and consonants, sound-spelling relationships in English, silent letters, syllabification and stress. Much of the material is presented using numbers, especially the *-teen* and *-ty* numbers, and the names of Melbourne suburbs. These are obviously useful and interesting for beginners, but they turned out to be equally so for those of my students who had lived in the district for two years or more. They were particularly fascinated by the pronunciation of *Tottenham* in relation to the spelling and it became a key reference point for future explanations and revision of word stress and the pronunciation of vowels in unstressed syllables as schwas. Interstate users could adapt the material using their local place-names.

The bilingual explanation and examples of English stress in terms of changes of pitch and length rather than force or loudness and the simple notation for representing stress in the text work very well indeed. Nothing further needed to be explained on the point and student performance on aural discrimination exercises showed accurate perception in most cases. All students were able subsequently able to imitate stress and intonation patterns accurately from models and their own production improved.

Subsequent units deal with pitch and length of syllables in sentences; selected individual sounds and letters in various positions; certain consonant clusters; linking; saying personal names; multisyllabic words, long occupation and place names; moving sentence stress; ordinal numbers; pitch, length and pausing; linking in dates; lists; ending letters and ending sounds; pitch changes at ends of questions and answers.

Having decided to try out *Into Speech Bilingually* as a set of classroom materials with my group, I used a section of a unit at the beginning of ESL lessons three or four times per week and continued with other integrated materials in the second part of the lessons. Students responded positively to the materials and activities and asked questions about many aspects of pronunciation and sound-spelling relationships in English.

The approach to word- and sentence-stress and intonation and the activities were not off-putting for students the way I had found with the old *Situational English* (1969) exercises we **used for similar purposes twenty years ago. The approach of *Into Speech Bilingually* lends itself to play and can be related** spontaneously to teenagers' musicality and enjoyment of pop music rhythms.

The Teacher's Book is a single volume, spiral-bound collection of all the material in the nine individual student's booklets, which consist of the Preliminary Unit and Units 1-8. It adds nothing to them. The printed material is bilingual, with English text on the left-hand page and identical Vietnamese text on the right-hand page of each pair of facing pages. The information and layout is so clear and well thought out that I found I did not need to explain anything further, though I could give more examples or extend exercises on occasion as I felt the need.

Each unit consists of several sections containing short explanations or presentations of material and practice exercises. The tapescript is integrated into the text. Audiotaped material is indicated by a number corresponding to the recording numbers on the cassette and graphic symbols indicating when to turn it on and off.

Taped material consists of examples and practice exercises in English only, though each unit and section is announced bilingually. One section of one unit contrasts the Vietnamese and English ordering and pronunciation of Vietnamese personal names (a bonus for teachers who can use it to help their students teach them to reproduce Vietnamese names correctly). The tape does not contain any explanatory material and only makes sense when used with the printed text. Each printed unit ends with Sendback Exercises for the student to record on a separate tape to send or give to the teacher for correction and feedback. In class, I had students do these exercises chorally or individually without recording them. You can hear clearly what each student is saying even in choral speaking. If you have a listening post or a language laboratory you could monitor individual students' progress with a larger group. Each unit contains a reprint of the bilingual glossary of terms related to pronunciation and spelling.

Because *Into Speech Bilingually* is intended for individualised use without a teacher present, the emphasis for the learner is far more on perception and discrimination than on production. However, I found most of my students spontaneously repeated examples from the tape and often asked for recorded segments to be replayed (so a cassette player with an index counter is handy).

For classroom use, a teacher could and would extend and supplement *Into Speech Bilingually* with further production activities integrated with other teaching and learning activities.

I also found that some of my students who knew enough English could fill in the blanks in a number of printed Practice Exercises before listening to the tape: sentence context and the limited choices in highly controlled discrimination exercises made these easy for them because they are intended for beginners.

For the individual learner at home, the English pages have the answers for the practice Exercises filled in, while the Vietnamese pages do not.

In a discussion after we had completed all the material over a term, the group volunteered the opinion that *Into Speech Bilingually* had been valuable and useful to them in teaching them to speak more clearly. They recommended using it with other ESL groups. All students felt their pronunciation had improved and in global terms it had. Some students improved more than others, but *Into Speech Bilingually* also gave us all a common metalanguage for talking about features of English pronunciation and for dealing expeditiously with pronunciation questions and problems in other contexts. The one or two students with long-established difficulties such as those with /p/ and /f/ still exhibited them and needed more work on them in appropriate contexts, but we had commonly understood tools for dealing with them.

Readers might think students' ostensible improvement in confidence in speaking, fluency and comprehensibility had more to do with ESL teachers' well-known tendency to tune into our students' English. But the improvement was the subject of spontaneous comment by other ESL and non-ESL teachers. One of the non-ESL people who noted students' clear pronunciation was the Mayor of Footscray who they were required to interview for their social studies course.

Having tried out *Into Speech Bilingually* with this group of learners, a "mixed-ability" group in mainstream terms, I would confidently give it to Vietnamese students at Year 10 level and above for independent work at home or at school. I have used it with other small groups of post-beginners and with Pre-Victorian Certificate of Education students preparing for Years 11 and 12. The content and general approach have turned out to be workable and not inappropriate for some individual non-Vietnamese learners in classes with a majority of Vietnamese speakers - I simply did not give them the Vietnamese pages of the printed text.

I am not sure how successful this course would be with younger learners, but judging by experience with one Year 8 student with disrupted schooling, it is important that Vietnamese students are literate in Vietnamese to get the most benefit from it or that the teacher teams up with a bilingual aide to present it to learners who are not securely literate in Vietnamese.

The author stresses the need for beginners to use the course. I would recommend most strongly that learners who speak tonal languages in late primary, secondary and adult on-arrival courses and (intensive) English Language Centres be taught this or similar material from the beginning so that they are better prepared for the transition into mainstream schooling or further study or training. Without such teaching, many Language Centre exit students present with already entrenched pronunciation difficulties which make them unintelligible to others in English and which sap their confidence.

There are some other Australian pronunciation materials which can be used for follow up or parallel use for secondary level beginners and post-beginners, such as *Aussie Talk* (1988) and the dialogues and many exercises in Clemens & Crawford (1986). An Australian version of Graham (1978) would also be useful up to a point.

Into Speech Bilingually is highly recommended for its approach and the lead it can give teachers for developing their own pronunciation materials. *Crossing the Barrier* (Macneil 1988), which reports on classroom research, gives examples of these kinds of pronunciation activities *integrated into course work*.

As many ESL teachers know, some ESL students do not pick up appropriate English pronunciation despite being in a mainstream English-dominant school or class settings. In many secondary schools, the dominant peer-group structure operates in such a way that the host English-speaking students do not and will not recruit recently arrived ESL students into the peer group or any communicative network which might share work, entertainment and interaction to any high level of activity, intensity or frequency. It is in communicative networks of speakers of the target language that people learn to communicate in it and "acquire" an acceptable, comprehensible pronunciation, accent and vocabulary. The host group is in the position of power and therefore determines whether the recently arrived ESL learner is recruited into informal networks or not. Teacher attempts to set up buddies for new arrivals in mainstream classes will not affect this for the better.

So unless we can miraculously change the informal social structure of a neighbourhood, community or student population of the school as it operates quite independently of the formal structures, we need to teach many aspects of ESOL, including pronunciation. Yule and Macdonald (1992) showed that if pronunciation is not taught at all, some learners' pronunciation will get worse. Dell Macneil has stressed the need to teach material like hers at the beginning of the English language learning process before problems become permanent features of the learner's pronunciation. Only if students are successfully recruited into English-speaking communicative networks in the informal structure of the school community or outside will there be little or no need to teach English pronunciation: these students will appear to pick it up, ie they will learn it in their networks.

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Stories from Lake Wobegon: Advanced listening and conversation skills
Frances Boyd and David Quinn
Longman 1990
$19.95, 184 p

Reviewed by Beatrice Head, Centre for Distance Learning, AMES, Victoria

Anyone who enjoyed Garrison Keillor's radio program *A Prairie Home Companion* on ABC FM a few years ago will love this course based on his monologues of life in the imaginary village of Lake Wobegon in the US midwest. Although the settings are distinctly American, these humorous anecdotes have the universal quality of traditional folktales. Told in Garrison Keillor's beautiful, soft, slow voice to a live audience, the stories are "windows into the life of Americans", and should stimulate learners to tell stories from their own experience of folklore.

Each of the twelve units provides the following language activities:

1 predicting the topic by discussing a picture, based on experience
2 preliminary vocabulary exercises in context
3. listening for the gist of the story
4. listening for details
5. predicting the outcome
6. getting the joke, understanding why the audience laughed
7. reviewing the vocabulary
8. interpreting the characters and their motivation
9. retelling the story
10. telling other stories from the students' own background
11. studying and practising language structures in context
12. extending the story in writing.

All these activities are intended to be done in small groups in class, as they involve constant interaction. The themes are ideal for stimulating comment, discussion and conversation.

Most of the questions are open-ended, but there is an answer key to exercises that have only one best answer. Complete tapescripts are also included at the back of the book.

In his introduction, Garrison Keillor recalls how frustrated he felt on his visit to Denmark, because he couldn't be "as humorous or romantic or brave or smart" in Danish as in English. "It's very hard for intelligent persons like us to accept being as stupid as we are in another language."

It is reassuring then to meet the foolish or eccentric inhabitants of Lake Wobegon, and laugh at them or with them. The quiet human comedy in these scenes from village life makes this course uniquely attractive and stimulating to teachers and learners.

The fact that the village is meant to be near Minneapolis rather than Melbourne is not crucial, as these people are just typical country folk not unlike those in rural communities in Australia. Therefore I feel sure that these materials will be very useful and appealing to classes at ASLPR level 1+ and above.

Study Speaking: a course in spoken English for academic purposes
Tony Lynch and Kenneth Anderson
Cambridge University Press 1992
$22.50, 99p
Cassette tape $15

Reviewed by Pieter Koster, Waratah Education Centre, NSW

One of the most important markets in the invisible export industry of education in Australia over the last decade has been the number of foreign students who come to Australian universities to improve their language skills before undertaking tertiary studies. Universities set levels of proficiency they think appropriate for their various courses, and students prepare for examinations to achieve the required gradings, taking courses at private language schools and/or attending university foundation studies courses.

The programs at such courses usually concentrate on reading and writing skills, since these are the forms of communication that students will have to command to participate fruitfully in tertiary level education. Listening also plays a part, but it is often assumed that the written text will compensate for any lack of comprehension in lectures and tutorials. Speaking, for specifically academic purposes, is largely overlooked, as it is quite possible to obtain university degrees without a great deal of speech. All that is required is to do the readings and write the essays and exams.

Such a view however, stems from an extreme results-oriented perspective on university education which is entirely out of keeping with its traditional function of providing education rather than mere training. Real education has an eye on the future. It addresses the student as a whole person and seeks to assist in his or her self-development. Training, on the other hand, is a mere replication and perpetuation of the present, interested only in the relevant skills for the target behaviour. A genuine course of academic English ought to provide preparation for the former, which will require teaching of speaking as well as the other three macroskills.

While many NESB tertiary students may possess quite adequate oral skills in general English, they often feel ill equipped to tackle the more specialised tasks required at university. Learning how to speak in an academic environment is essential, then, not only for survival (ie how to request help in the library), but also to enable full participation in the processes of their and our education, as a more meaningful exchange of ideas occurs.

As a postgraduate student in a course taken by many NESB students, I can testify to the frustration and disappointment of such students at not being able to participate fully in their course due to lack of oral skills. Many lack the speaking confidence to ask necessary questions, or test their ideas against those of others. Prepared seminar presentations are better, but sometimes a great deal of the work they have done is underutilised because they lose control of the seminar topic once discussion begins. Undoubtedly, we are all poorer for their silence.

Any material that will assist teachers to prepare students for the challenges of speaking in an academic environment is therefore welcome. *Study Speaking* is doubly so. It is part of the English for Academic Purposes series published by Cambridge, and it is a very useful addition to that series. It is aimed at foreign language students at approximately IELTS 4.5 - 6.0, or TOEFL 450 - 580. There are also sections for students above this level. The stated objective is to assist students acquire the speaking skills required to function successfully academically.

There are separate introductions for the student (information about how the course is organised and what it covers) and the teacher (aims and rationale, and information about design, level and grading). The rationale places the work squarely on the base of recent research into second language acquisition.

The authors operate with a model based on Krashen's emphasis on comprehensible input and embracing Swain's insistence on comprehensible output. They believe progress occurs when students are faced with problem-solving tasks so that they encounter both input and output difficulties which must be overcome. Consonant with this view is their proposal that a learner's use of interactional strategies should be judged by the effectiveness in getting the message conveyed, rather than accuracy of form. Strategic competence should be a focus of classroom activity.

The organisation of the book reflects these tenets. There are eight units, each with an information task in which students work cooperatively in pairs or groups to solve a problem or exchange information. This is followed by a 'scenario' where students assume assigned roles in adversarial communicative tasks. These two sections provide the student with opportunities for interaction in which there is a common goal, eg information sharing, as well as divergent tasks without a common goal, eg debates.

The last section is on seminar skills. It includes a listening exercise and a presentation by the student. The students make an evaluation of their own competence. After all, who is better able to judge the effectiveness of a communicative strategy than a student's peers ? This feature of the book is particularly attractive, releasing the teacher to be the facilitator and enabler, and empowering the students to establish and meet their own criteria.

An interesting inclusion on the audio cassette is the number of students' attempts at some of the communication tasks. These are transcribed in the text, along with interpretative comments by the authors. Listening to them makes a refreshing change from the often stilted scripted conversations found on many language learning tapes, and underlines the authors' emphasis on communicative effectiveness rather than formal correctness as the real measure of success.

Consistent with the notion of providing comprehensible input, not much of the material for the students to work with is authentic. The provision of more authentic material with appropriate exercises would have been welcome, from my point of view. Despite this, and its almost unavoidable bias to English universities and institutions, *Study Speaking* is very valuable resource, providing students with the wherewithal to develop the speaking skills they will need in the pursuit of their academic goals.

Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers
Michael McCarthy
Cambridge University Press 1991
$27.50, 213p

Reviewed by Pieter Koster,
Waratah Education Centre, NSW

Teaching people to speak English is not the same as teaching them about the English language. A student who is able to explain clearly the difference between defining and non-defining relative clauses, or give a perfect exposition of mixed conditionals, but is unable to ask for directions or complain, has not yet learnt to speak English, and his teachers have failed him. Of course, in some cases it can facilitate the learning process if the teacher is able to explain features of the language in terms of grammar and the student is sufficiently familiar with grammar to understand and apply its rules. In any case, the language teacher can never know too much about the language she is teaching, even if much of that knowledge forms only a backdrop to her lessons,.

The realisation that language is more than the sum of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation has led to an increased interest in pragmatics in general, and discourse analysis in particular. Discourse analysis is an attempt to understand how language is used to do things. When my wife asks me every Sunday evening, "Have you put the garbage out ?" the form of the utterance is merely a request for information, but we both know that its force is that of reminder and perhaps of request. If I were to reply with a simple "no" and return to my book, she would doubtless judge the response to be inadequate, and resort to more direct strategies. If, however, she were to ask, "Have you read Peter Carey's latest novel ?", we both understand that this is a simple request for information, perhaps as a prelude to a discussion of the merits or otherwise of the novel in question. The utterance has the same surface form, but a different illocutionary force.

Discourse analysis examines how we use language to do things. What enables us to understand each other when the force of an utterance is at variance with its surface meaning? In the first example above, it has something to do with a mutual acceptance of conventional male and female roles regarding putting out the garbage. Someone who is unaware of this cultural factor may find my possible response of "Oh, yeah. I'll do it in a minute" rather strange, although it seems perfectly natural to my wife, for she knows I am responding to the illocutionary force rather than the surface meaning.

There are myriads of similar questions. Why do we choose the utterances we do ? How do we know when to speak and when to remain silent, ie how does turn-taking in conversations work? How does the speaker/writer signal his intentions, and how does the listener/reader understand them? How do we know the difference between telling a joke, narrating a sad story and repeating gossip ? How do we maintain cohesion and coherence in spoken and written language ? How does the relationship between the interlocutors affect the dynamics of their interaction ? What determines the appropriateness of an utterance ?

Language teachers may well be expected to have more than a passing interest in such questions, and Michael McCarthy's book *Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers* will help them to find answers. He points out at the beginning of his book that discourse analysis is not a method for teaching languages, but a way of describing and understanding how language is used. The teacher must decide whether and how the material presented in the book can be used.

There are six well-written and easy-to-read chapters. The first is an introduction to discourse analysis, and subsequent chapters deal with its use in understanding grammar, vocabulary and phonology. The final chapters deal with spoken and written language. Teachers with a special interest in one or more of these areas should first read the introductory chapter and then turn to 'their' chapter, which they will find to be a comprehensive summary, and more than enough stimulation for further thought and activity. Those who have had some exposure to Halliday's systemic functional grammar will appreciate the attempt to apply it to teaching practices.

One of the appealing features of the book is the use of reader activities interspersed through the text. Each chapter has from seven to a dozen such activities, which encourage the reader to respond to the text and also to raise further questions. They are a useful check of whether or not you are still 'with' the author. They could, incidentally, form the basis for some interesting exercises for students in classrooms.

For readers who wish to pursue a particular aspect of discourse analysis further, there is a flourishing literature, with which McCarthy is very conversant, and to which he makes frequent reference. The list of references at the conclusion of the book is a comprehensive survey of the literature from Austin's *How to do things with words* (1962) to material published in the late '80s.

In summary, this is a fascinating read. It will leave the language teacher more aware of language use, and wondering how to incorporate what she has learnt about it into her lessons for language learners. It shows up some of the inadequacies of a structural approach to language teaching, and indicates ways in which a more pragmatic approach could be used. Language teachers who remain unaware of discourse analysis will soon be out of step with current teaching theory and practice. As an introduction to the field, McCarthy's book is tops.

ESL Development: Language and Literacy in Schools: Tapping the Potential. **The Report of the NLLIA ESL Development Project.**
Penny McKay, Project Coordinator
Published by the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia, 2 volumes.
$25 each

Reviewed by Alan Williams, School of Education, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria, and ACTA Policy Convenor.

The project to develop national ESL profiles has been the most significant national project in the schools ESL area for some time. These two volumes present the outcomes of a massive project undertaken by the NLLIA between 1988 and the end of 1992, and were intended to be the basis for the development of the Australian Education Council National ESL Scales, which were to operate in conjunction with national profiles in the eight key learning areas identified by the Australian Educational Council.

The prospect of national scales that could be used to make judgments about the educational programs offered to NESB students has elicited mixed feelings from TESOL professional organisations. On one hand, sensitive and well-based scales could make the identification of the needs of our students clearer to administrators, ESL specialists and mainstream teachers, enhance the education provided for ESL students in schools and provide a concrete reference point for arguing for fairer distribution and allocation of funds and resources. It would also provide valuable benchmarks for our work as teachers in schools and in the lobbying and advocacy work of our professional organisations. On the other hand, there is the risk that poorly conceived and invalid profiling devices would make it harder for our students to have their needs adequately met, and add enormous difficulty to our work.

These volumes are centred on the ESL profiles developed as part of this project, but include a lot more that will be a valuable resource for ESL teachers and others with an interest in the assessment of the progress and development of NESB students. The project work was done by the NLLIA Language Testing and Curriculum Centre at Griffith University, the NLLIA Language Testing Centre at the University of Melbourne and the NLLIA Language Acquisition Research Centre at the University of Sydney, and was supplemented by the contributions of many TESOL professionals as steering committee members, and in extensive consultations undertaken by the project team throughout the country.

The materials in the two volumes constitute a valuable set of documents and discussion of some key issues in the field of assessing language proficiency. The first volume includes the ESL Bandscales (profile descriptions), examples of assessment activities and a reporting format, as well as some background information to the project and the thinking that went into the project. The second volume contains documents and articles related to the concepts and issues that have informed the work that has gone into the project. The two volumes will be of interest to all with an interest in language assessment, although the first volume will probably hold most interest for teachers, consultants and others concerned with using or producing formal assessment devices and formats for ESL students, and for teachers wishing to have a clearer understanding of how they can go about incorporating better assessment of their students' language into their work.

Assessment of language proficiency is a complicated issue. It raises questions of what is involved in language and language use, links between assessment and syllabus design, links between assessment and reporting, distinctions between formalised procedures and spontaneous and informal procedures which inform the judgments of teachers (and others). Teachers have often seen formalised assessment

procedures as restrictive and narrow. The NLLIA project set out to produce bandscales that were pedagogically useful, rather than another device that would influence teachers to teach towards the test or the assessment procedure. The bandscales also set out to capture the manner in which ESL students develop in their use of English in the context of Australian schools, and acknowledge their starting points as speakers of languages other than English and their proficiency and developing maturity as users of their first language. The descriptors for each level on the bandscales therefore include reference to the students' use of their first language (especially at the lower levels of proficiency in English), and statements about their use of English in the general context of school life as well as in the more formal domains of their school work. There are three sets of bandscales to reflect the differing levels of development and maturity of junior primary, middle/upper primary and secondary age students, and separate scales for each of the four macro-skills, to acknowledge the likelihood that many students will be at different levels in each skill. The possibility that students may come to learning English with different literacy levels in their first language is acknowledged with special bands for low literacy level students, as is the possibility of some students plateauing at some points. The scales have been informed by the comprehensive model of language proficiency being developed by Bachman and Palmer (details on this and other issues are provided in extensive bibliographies provided in the materials), and by work done on developmental stages in language acquisition at LARC at the University of Sydney. (An interesting and extensive discussion of acquisitional sequences of particular syntactic forms and the rapid profiling procedure developed from this model forms part of the second volume.)

The bandscales are not without their problems. To most, their **bulk may appear daunting, but when teachers who work with one age group of students disregard the other age groups this is not such a problem. The materials on rapid profiling, whilst interesting, reflect a different approach to assessment based on** a particular model of second language acquisition, and don't relate directly to the profile bandscales. The terminology used in some descriptions may cause some difficulty for non-TESOL teachers and administrators, although glossaries are provided. The materials are not in a format that can be taken off the shelf, used for 30 minutes and filed away again. The require teachers to understand and engage with the principles and understandings on which they are based. In this sense they will enhance the practice of teachers, once the latter familiarise themselves with the thinking behind them.

The NLLIA project team have produced a valuable document, one that will help teachers incorporate better and soundly-based assessment practices and record keeping into their teaching. Its strength is its acknowledgment of the context of ESL students' developing proficiency in English, and its mapping of the language acquisition of ESL students, rather than progress in a specific curriculum area.
The fact that of some of these key features have not been incorporated into the draft National ESL Scales is a matter of grave concern for teachers of ESL in schools. The clarity of conceptualisation and the comprehensive mapping of the language and social development of NESB students in Australian schools in this NLLIA document has the potential to inform and improve ESL teaching practice and programs. The work put into the profiles by the writers and the teachers who trialed it deserves to be taken much further.

Copies can be ordered from the NLLIA, Level 3, 112 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002.

TESOL Resources

***Rosemary Serong, Sophie Arkoudis** and **Tony Ferguson** have selected and annotated the following list of materials on oral English language.*

If you know of any resources for either TESOL specialists or mainstream teachers of students who speak other languages, do send in their details: ***TESOL in Context*** would be pleased to list them in our Resources column.

1. Richards, Jack, Deborah Gordon and Andrew Marper 1987 *Listen for it* Oxford University Press: New York. Students Book $21.95, 87 pp, Teachers' Guide $17.50, 63 pp, Audio Cassette (3) $45.00

   Listen for it is an intensive course in listening skills for low intermediate to intermediate level students. The aim is to teach students to listen more effectively by giving them practice in different kinds of listening strategies and purposes. Topic based themes cover health, shopping, entertainment, employment, socialising, travel and directions. Each unit includes activities for groups or pairs of students, recordings of task based listening activities and tactics for effective listening. Although the audio cassettes are American accented and many of the illustrations reflect American culture, *Listen for it* is a useful source of ideas.

2. Richards, Jack C 1990 *Listen Carefully* Oxford University Press: Oxford. $16.95, 95 pp, Audio Cassette $36.00

   Listen carefully contains fifteen units of systematic micro-listening skills for elementary students. The units are topic based including shopping, eating out, travel, health and following instructions. The audio cassette contains a variety of accents, including non-native English speakers. Answer Key and Typescripts are included.

3. Wyatt, Patricia and M. Rosanna McEvedy 1990 *Listen and Do* Institute of Applied Language Studies, Western Australian College of Advanced Education: Claremont. $16.95,
   138 pp, Audio Cassette $23.00

   Listen and Do uses Australian and New Zealand content to "develop the students' cultural literacy and their listening skills". The book is designed to be used by overseas students in ELICOS and tertiary bridging programs, users of non-standard English in Adult Community Education, in monolingual remedial English courses and Year 11 and 12 ESL students. The workbook has twenty task-based, graded worksheets and an audio cassette suitable for elementary to intermediate plus students. It could be used in a language laboratory, Individual Learning Centre or for small group work. Answer Key and Typescript are included.

4. Cambridge Skills for Fluency Series

Collie, Joanne and Stephen Slater 1991 *Speaking 1* Cambridge University Press: Melbourne. $14.50, 74 pp, Audio Cassette $15.00.

Collie, Joanne and Stephen Slater 1991 *Speaking 2* Cambridge University Press: Melbourne. $14.50, 90 pp, Audio Cassette $15.00.

Doff, Adrian and Carolyn Becket 1991 *Listening 1* Cambridge University Press: Melbourne. $14.50, 90 pp, Audio Cassette $15.00.

Doff, Adrian and Carolyn Becket 1991 *Listening 2* Cambridge University Press: Melbourne. $14.50, 90 pp, Audio Cassette $15.00.

These materials are supplementary materials covering the skills of listening, speaking, for pre-intermediate students. *Listening 1* and *2* aim to "develop the students' ability to understand real life spoken English, through recordings of natural, spontaneous speech; selected and edited to make them accessible to each level". *Speaking 1* and *2* aim "to develop oral fluency by focussing on topics that are personally relevant to students and which encourage them to draw on their own life experiences, feelings and cultural knowledge".

The books in the series are flexible and therefore easy to integrate with a main course. The Speaking and Listening books each contain twenty units based on topical issues and involving a variety of imaginative tasks for pair or group work. The Listening books are mainly intended for classroom use however many of the activities are suitable for self-access or Individual Learning Centres. The cassettes include mainly British accents but a variety of voices and speaking styles. Tapescripts are included in each book. The units are not graded linguistically and within each unit there are activities which are suitable for the lower level students.

5. Rogerson, Pamela and Judy B. Gilbert 1990 *Speaking Clearly Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension for Learners of English* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. Teachers' Book $19.95, 114 pp, Students' Book $17.95, 136 pp, Audio Cassette $29.95.

These books assume that suprasegmentals are just as important as segmentals, if not more so, for intelligibility. They can be used as a complete course, unit by unit or the Pronunciation and Listening tests (which can be photocopied) in the Students' Book can be used diagnostically to select units which correspond to students' needs. The Teachers' Book has a Potential Problems section at the end of each pronunciation unit which identifies likely difficulties and L1 transfer problems. It also contains practical teaching ideas, keys to exercises and tapescripts. The book is designed for intermediate and advanced students.

6. Dickerson, Wayne B 1989 *Stress in the Speech Stream: The Rhythm of Spoken English* University of Illinois Press: Urbana and Chicago. $46.95, 432 pp.

Worth considering as a teacher reference at least, this package consisting of a loose-leaf textbook/exercise book for students, a teacher's manual and a set of five cassette tapes intended for high intermediate to advanced learners focuses on the pronunciation of words, phrases and sentences with an English-style rhythm that helps listeners understand the speaker's message. It teaches: four simple rules which apply to the stress patterns of 70,000 polysyllabic words; how to stress sentences so that listeners know what is new and important; which vowel and consonant sounds to modify or eliminate to make speech sound smooth and natural; how to continue improving pronunciation outside of class.

7. Kenworthy, Joanne 1987 *Teaching English Pronunciation* Longman Handbooks for Language Teachers Harlow $25.25, 164 pp.

The emphasis of this book is on linking work on pronunciation with work on developing speaking skills in integrated teaching, concentrating on intelligibility. It focuses in Part one on building awareness and concern for pronunciation, extending and consolidating word stress, rhythm, sentence stress, linking, intonation, and then on sounds and spellings. It includes useful classroom activities. Part two lists specific problems for first language speakers of Arabic, Chinese (Cantonese and Hokkien), French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Spanish and Turkish, with priorities for teaching in each case.

8. Morley, Joan (ed) 1987 *Current Perspectives on Pronunciation: Practices Anchored in Theory* TESOL Publications: Washington, DC.

9. *Behind the News (BTN)*

Behind the News is a half-hour ABC TV Education program on background to current affairs. ACTAID Pty Ltd distributes weekly support material devised by an experienced TESOL teacher. The main purpose of this material is to facilitate access by NESB students of a variety of ages - upper primary, secondary and adult - to a mainstream program which is of general interest. Each week the mailout consists of a set of questions, follow-up exercises and a transcript of five pages. Teachers must have access to video and audio playback facilities.

Further information is available from Alison Rimes, Office Manager, ACTAID Pty Ltd, PO Box 226, Jamison, ACT 2614. Tel: (06) 207 4444 or 207 4441.

10. Doyle, Brendan 1993 *Pleased to Meet You* Piscean Productions: NSW. Book $12.95, Cassette $12.95, Video $49.95, Complete package $75.85

Pleased to Meet You encourages ESL students to actively participate in everyday Aussie conversation. The course consists of a book containing a transcript of all conversations with notes on language features and cultural aspects, audio cassette of all conversations used and a 25 minute video. Components of this course are available individually or as a complete package. Available from AEE, PO Box 455, Cammeray, NSW 2062 and allow $4.00 for postage.

11. Brown, Alison *Activities for the Communicative Classroom* Adult Migrant Education Service WA $20

A book of photocopiable classroom activities suitable for beginner to intermediate level ESL students. The activities - a mixture of pair and group work - encourage students to interact communicatively. The activities are based on topics of interest to ESL learners and use West Australian names and features.

Hoang, Hoa *Pair Work and Group Work Communicative Activities* Adult Migrant Education Service WA $20

A handbook of classroom worksheets comprising pair work and group work information gap activities. Each activity is accompanied by teachers' notes with suggestions for use and examples of language likely to emerge from the activity.

Hoang, Hoa, Lindy Ng and Alison Brown *Information Gap Activities* Adult Migrant Education Service WA $20

A book of photocopiable information gap activities designed to foster communicative interaction between students. The activities are suitable mainly for pair work and are on topics of interest to ESL students. Suitable for beginner to intermediate students.

The above materials are available form Adult Migrant Education Service 3rd Floor, 379 Hay St., Perth, WA 6000.

12 Collie, Joanne and Gillian Porter Ladousse 1991 *Paths into Poetry* Oxford University Press: Oxford. $14.95, 60 pp, Audio Cassette $18.95.

Paths into Poetry is suitable for students of English from intermediate level and above. It comprises a selection of contemporary poetry written in English and a variety of classroom activities for each poem, including notes for teachers. Through group and pair work students explore the meaning of the poems, discuss their reactions and write responses.

13. Bygate, Martin 1987 *Speaking* Oxford University Press: Oxford. $29.95, 121 pp.

How is speaking to be defined as a language ability? What approaches have been adopted to teach it? How far does a communicative perspective require a reappraisal of these approaches, and what are the best techniques to teach speaking effectively? This teacher reference book encourages teachers to explore issues such as these.

14. Anderson, Anne and Tony Lynch 1988 *Listening* Oxford University Press: Oxford. $29.95, 150 pp.

TESOL Troubleshooter

For this issue we sent some of your letters to members of ACTA associations around Australia.
Here are practical responses to two questions

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

I am teaching English to senior students in an inner city secondary college. Part of the assessment for the course is an oral presentation. Can you give me any suggestions that I can use with the ESL students in the class?

Searching for Clues, Vic.

Dear Searching for Clues,

There are many strategies that you can use in your classroom that will assist not only the ESL students but also the NESB and ESB students. A general framework that can be adopted is to move from group discussions to debates to formal prepared talks. To begin with there should be plenty of structured practice of the task in a supportive group atmosphere. This is important to help students overcome nervousness and pronunciation difficulties. Start with discussions of simple familiar topics or issues. Some examples are should parents physically discipline their children?; should our school have a uniform? Encourage group work and informal debate to develop points for teams to make in their argument. Feed in essential vocabulary and structures. For example, *Ladies and gentlemen, it is clear that; however; of course; finally.* Model the task yourself for the students complete with appropriate body language and paralinguistics. A useful strategy is to mime the speech to exaggerate appropriate methods of gaining and holding the attention of the audience. Listen to each student practise their speech from prepared notes, correcting punctuation, stress and grammar. Tell students that they need to learn their speech and reduce it to a series of one word or one line points, as they will not be allowed to read from notes in the debate or talk. Have a practice dress rehearsal complete with applause and encourage student discussion of each other's strengths and weaknesses and allow very nervous or shy students to choose their own audience of selected friends, if possible. Don't forget to provide students with positive feedback after the debate/talk.

Paul Hoban, VATME

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

We are writing to ask your advice on how to get ESL students at both the primary and secondary levels more involved in classroom discussion and to participate more actively when there are very mixed language levels in the class. We have tried a buddy system and gentle persuasion but the students just get embarrassed and other students do the talking for them. How can we get ESL students to speak out?

Frustrated, Queensland.

Dear Frustrated,

Getting ESL students to speak out in a mainstream classroom is a very common dilemma for teachers. There seems to be a cycle of problems ranging from the expectations of the school to the English language proficiency of the student and to the behaviour of peers and teachers. ESL students may not grasp the demands of the task and may lack oral fluency. This can lead to peer group impatience, loss of attention, even ridicule. ESL students become unwilling to speak out in English due to embarrassment, and thus teachers don't call on ESL students and have low expectations of them. This can result in both ESL students and their peers believing the teacher does not value ESL students.

Addressing the above problems in creative ways is essential. There are two key approaches that can be used across the curriculum, and at different year levels. The first is encouraging speaking out in the home language. For example, in a Year 4 mainstream maths lesson a learner may successfully complete a number task and the teacher can ask her to explain to the class what she has done. She does this in Japanese while the rest of the class tries to associate as she explains. For many of the class members it is the first time they appreciate the difficulties the learner deals with all day. In a Year 7 mainstream science lesson students can group together in 'language enclaves' to talk through new information presented visually and in English by the teacher. After speaking on the topic in their home language they are clear about any questions they need answers to, have planned their written assignment, and are ready to revert to English. In a Year 11 mainstream Italian class, two bilingual students give a joint audio-visual presentation in Italian. In a Year 3 mainstream Language Arts class a Lebanese child displays a picture he has drawn and reads aloud the accompanying caption he has written in Arabic. Other children suggest English versions and the teacher helps him choose. Another child speaks out the words of a song in Polish and models pronunciation.

The second approach to encouraging ESL students to speak out is to choose themes, topics and activities that draw on past experience unfamiliar to others in the classroom For example, developing a Communication Studies task card such as:

> You have been employed by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs to inform Australian diplomats about social etiquette in different countries. Choose a country (or invent one), and explain how a guest must behave when invited out to dinner at someone's house.

An *Animals* theme with a geographic reference could be designed to take account of students' previous home countries, enabling students to provide information that delights their peers. Mainland Chinese students in a Year 2 class have first-hand experience of giant pandas and are helped by their ESL teacher to put together a chart using photos, pictures and text. They speak out confidently to the rest of the class who recognise them as experts, and encourage them to keep talking. The teacher does the same with housing, clothing, crafts, music, art, food, and so on. And a final example, developing specialist expertise, where an ESL teacher deliberately pre-teaches content and skills ahead of the Year 11 Physics teacher, so that students have the wherewithal to speak out, or another ESL teacher uses withdrawal time to help Year 4 children develop word-processing skills so that they can act as tutors to the rest of the class later on.

Jenny Barnett, SATESOL.

TESOL Interchange

Sharing Practical Knowledge

***Wendy Jacob** and **Dot Price** wrote to **TESOL in Context** in response to an article in our issue on collaborative approaches to learning and teaching.*

Introduction

We read with interest Ruth Wajnryb's article on trainee teacher supervision in ***TESOL in Context*** (Vol 2 No 1 1992) as we recently devised a model to help teachers and student teachers to work together effectively on teaching practice.

The role of the classroom teacher is to help student teachers develop their practical knowledge and appreciate how theory and practice complement each other.

Practical knowledge is based on experience, theory, personal values, beliefs and philosophy. After some years of teaching, teachers may say they do things intuitively, but this probably just means that they are out of the habit of making the reasons for their actions explicit even to themselves. However, they need to find ways to explain their actions to student teachers.

Sharing Practical Knowledge: The Supervision Model

Traditionally, field experience was designed to allow students to observe experienced teachers and use their observations as a model and to allow them to borrow a teacher's class to try out

what they had learned. This view fails to provide fully for the stages of learning between observation and independent practice. Some field supervisors in the Northern Territory have found traditional field experiences unhelpful and stressful for themselves and student teachers. We have developed the SPK model to help overcome the problems.

The SPK model is based on practical knowledge that learning is active, interactive and that learners need to work through a cycle of experiences designed to allow them to explore, practise and manipulate knowledge and so become *progressively* independent. It also provides effective opportunities for teachers to articulate and share their practical knowledge.

The key feature is joint negotiation. Other important characteristics are: sharing responsibility; establishing collegiality; allowing an appropriate amount of autonomy; and continually modifying practice, cyclical planning, observing, modelling, teaching, commenting, analysing and reflecting.

The model depends primarily upon the field supervisor sharing personal philosophies and making clear links between theory and practice. It also depends upon the participants meeting before the field experience to establish common understandings, goals, good communications, a good working relationship, mutual respect and trust.

SPK has three layers: modelling, joint negotiating and working independently. The model has three stages: planning, teaching and reflecting.

The planning stage

It is vital for student teachers to be involved at every point so that they develop a holistic perspective. The field supervisor must invite the student teacher to contribute to the class work program and the decision making. By valuing the student's contributions, the field supervisor lays the foundations of collegiality. A field supervisor might do this by asking such questions as

I wonder what we should do next ?
I wonder if we need to do this now ?
Do you think...?
Can you think of a better way to...?
Have you any ideas about...?

At this time they will also negotiate the teaching load, work out precisely what part each of them will play and how they will interact in the classroom with each other and the class. The student teacher can take part or full responsibility for the class teaching and organisation, for either small sections or large parts of the day.

The teaching stage

The teaching stage encompasses observing, modelling, teaching and commenting. The field supervisor models how they operate and how they use specific strategies. The student teacher observes how the field supervisor uses their practical knowledge in the classroom. **Similarly, the field supervisor observes or interacts with the student teacher in the teaching role in a planned, non - threatening way.** Assessment becomes a natural and integral part of the practice.

In both these situations the field supervisor and student teacher exchange immediate comments and reflections. These should demonstrate how teachers constantly modify their plans and practice. For example:

Did you notice how...?
I decided not to do that because...
The children were so interested that...
I've never done that before but...
I thought the children were having
difficulty with that so...
Why did you...?
I can understand now why...
I wish that I had...
If I did this again I would...

The reflecting stage

In the conference, the field supervisor and student teacher reflect in greater depth about the teaching and learning which has taken place and its effect on the continuing program. They assess the children's learning, analyse the effectiveness of the teaching, discuss and if necessary modify the following stages. They may openly and honestly consider such questions as

Do you think the children understood
the way ... is structured ?
Were the children able to...?
How well do you think the children could...?
...seemed a really effective way to...
Do we need to...?
I think we might have to change...

They reflect on the value of this unit of work, the strategies, the teacher's role and how they fulfil it. They might discuss what they did, how and why, referring back to theory and personal philosophies and how these are reflected in classroom practice. This also leads to considerations of wider social and educational issues. Reflective questions and comments might be

It was interesting to see the students
making connections between ... and ...
on the news last night.
Do you think doing... was a good idea?
I'm not sure it helped the children to...
I was interested to see how you helped
the children to manage ... without
taking over.
I could never understand before how a
teacher could provide for individual
differences within one program.
I can now see what you meant when
you said you believed...
Next practice I'm going to develop the
idea of ... even further.

SPK recognises the complex nature of teaching and sharing practical knowledge and permits the participants to explore these together in a professional working relationship.

Reference

Wajnryb, R 1992 The Light Globe Has to Want to Change: Supervision as a Collaborative Process in ***TESOL in Context*** Vol 2 No 1 pp 6 -8

Wendy Jacob and Dot Price currently work on AEP curriculum projects in the Northern Territory Department of Education. Both have many years classroom experience as mainstream and ESL teachers and have NT Master Teacher II status.

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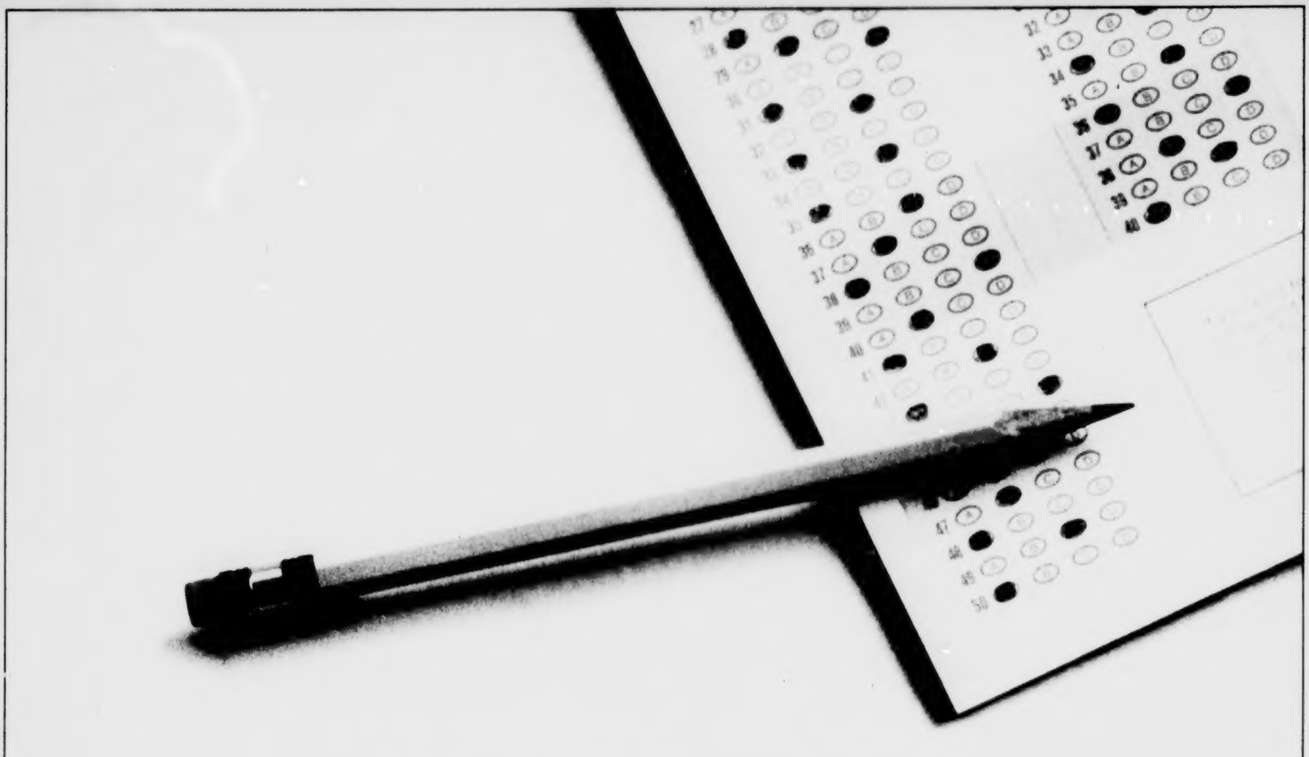

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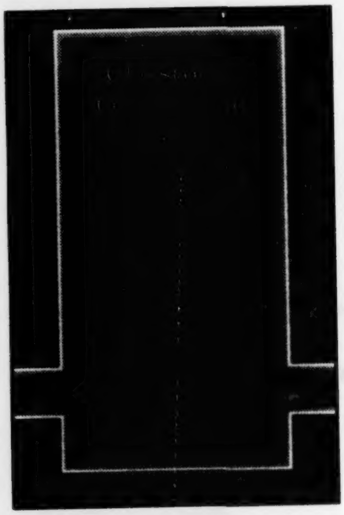

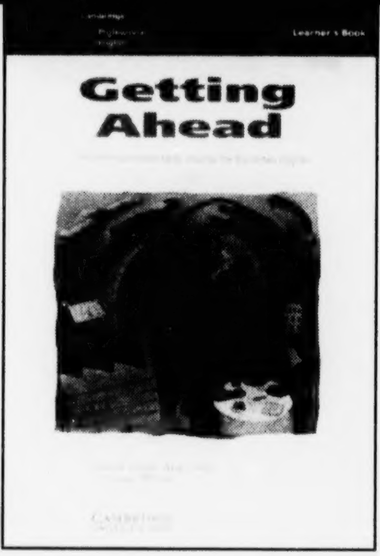

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TESOL is the teaching of English by specialist teachers to students of language backgrounds other than English in order to develop their skills in spoken and written English communication. At the same time, TESOL teachers strive to be sensitive to the diverse linguistic, cultural and learning needs of individuals.

TESOL draws on a knowledge of the nature of the English language, first and second language acquisition, crosscultural communication and appropriate curriculum, materials and methodology for multicultural contexts. It is an integral part of the broader social, educational and political context. It can inform and be informed by this context.

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Editorial

Teacher Research

If academic research into language teaching and learning is the backbone of research, then research by language teachers, their asking of questions and seeking of answers, is its flesh.

In this issue we have brought together the views of practising teachers and of academics on the topic of teacher research - views which agree to a remarkable extent on the value to our students, to the profession and to teachers of their endeavours. It is now generally accepted that classroom practitioners are agents of curriculum development and change, and that they are ideally placed to contribute to the understanding of language learning and teaching.

Teacher research is often, but not always, located in the classroom. It often begins with the need to deal with a practical problem. It can often fill the gap between theory and practice. As David Nunan points out in the Issues section, a great deal of educational research is wasted because it does not address the practical problems of teachers and learners, and because it does not include the teachers as partners in the research effort.

Research by teachers, as exemplified in this issue of *TESOL in Context*, begins with reflection on practice: "Why won't they join in in group work?" "I need to work out a system for recording what really happens during that activity" "Everyone is enthusiastic about that technique, why won't it work for me?" and so on. But it also goes beyond the classroom in trying to chart the process of educational change as experienced by a large organisation.

The contributions come from classroom teachers and from the tertiary sector. The teachers describe their investigations of teaching and learning processes and detail their findings. Academic researchers, for their part, provide support, encouragement and advice to the teachers, and it is clear that they want to strengthen the teachers' role as researchers. This seems to suggest that the supposed gulf between theory and practice can be bridged by collaborative research which takes into account the needs of all the participants. It may also indicate that our contributors from the academic sector have had the opportunity to observe at close range the quality of the language teaching profession in this country and welcome its input and collaboration.

Lilli Lipa and Chris Howell

The theme for the next ***TESOL in Context*** issue is *Making Connections*, picking up the theme of the annual ACTA/WATESOL Conference held in Perth in January 1994.

ACTA hopes to encourage sharing and interchange among the adult and child TESOL, pre-school, school, TAFE, tertiary, adult literacy, training, mainstream and specialist teachers.

Contributions on this theme in particular, and on other relevant topics, should be forwarded to the editor as soon as possible.

TESOL Issues

What's the use of research?

David Nunan

Introduction

There is widespread agreement by those of us stranded uncomfortably between the language classrooms and academia that there is a gap between theory, research and practice. According to van Lier, the gap is due in part to the obstacles which prevent teachers from doing research:

> Those of us who work in teacher education know that one of the most difficult things to balance in a course is the tension between theoretical and practical aspects of the profession. ... theory and practice are not perceived as integral parts of a teacher's practical professional life. ... This situation is the result of communication gaps caused by an increasingly opaque research technocracy, restrictive practices in educational institutions and bureaucracies (e.g. not validating research time, or not granting sabbaticals to teachers for professional renovation), and overburdening teachers who cannot conceive of ways of theorizing and researching that come out of daily work and facilitate that daily work. (van Lier 1992: 3)

It has been suggested that the involvement of teachers in classroom-based action research can go some way towards reconciling theory, practice and research (Mickan 1991; Lewis 1992). The action research process is generally initiated by the identification by the practitioner of something which they find puzzling or problematic. This puzzlement or problematicity may, in fact, have emerged from a period of observation and reflection. The second step is the collection of baseline data through a preliminary investigation which is designed to identify what is currently happening in the classroom without trying to change anything. Based on a review of the data yielded by the preliminary investigation, a hypothesis is formed. The next step is the development of some form of intervention or change to existing practice, along with a way of evaluating the effects of this change. The final step is reporting on the outcomes of the interaction, and, if necessary, planning further interventions.

I believe that action research (AR) can be justified on professional development grounds. However, I believe that AR can also be justified on research grounds. In fact, I believe that there is something essentially patronising in the view that, while AR might be good for professional development, it hardly counts as research. Let us, to use a currently fashionable term, 'deconstruct' this view. First of all, what do we mean by 'research'? What is the function of research?

"The involvement of teachers in classroom-based action research can go some way towards reconciling theory, practice and research."

Elsewhere, I have defined research as "a systematic process of inquiry consisting of three elements or components: (1) a question, problem, or hypothesis, (2) data, (3) analysis and interpretation of data" (Nunan 1992a: 3). Action research incorporates these three elements and therefore qualifies as 'real' research. For me, the salient distinction between action research and other forms of research is that in action research the research process is initiated and carried out by the practitioner. As far as I am concerned, the opposition is not between action research and 'real' research, but between good research and bad research. A further characteristic, perhaps differentiating action research from other forms of practitioner research, is that it incorporates an element of intervention and change.

Fundamental to any discussion of research is a consideration of the researcher's conception of notions such as 'truth', 'objectivity', and the status of knowledge. I recently attempted to deal with the tensions of objective and subjective knowledge by suggesting that they represent two alternative ways of looking at the world:

> Two alternative conceptions of the nature of research provide a point of tension within the book. The first view is that external truths exist 'out there' somewhere. According to this view, the function of research is to uncover these truths. The second view is that truth is a negotiable commodity contingent upon the historical context within which phenomena are observed and interpreted. Further '[research] standards are subject to change in the light of practice [which] would seem to indicate that the search for a substantive universal, ahistorical methodology is futile.' (Chalmers 1990: 21) ... This second, context-bound attitude to research entails a rather

> different role for the classroom practitioner than the first. If knowledge is tentative and contingent upon context, rather than absolute, then I believe that practitioners, rather than being consumers of other people's research, should adopt a research orientation to their own classrooms. There is evidence that the teacher-researcher movement is alive and well and gathering strength. However, if the momentum which has gathered is not to falter, and if the teacher-researcher movement is not to become yet another fad, then significant numbers of teachers, graduate students, and others will need skills in planning, implementing and evaluating research. (Nunan, 1992a)

There are those who would argue that my definition of research as a systematic process of inquiry involving formulating a question, collecting relevant data, and analysing and interpreting that data is inadequate, that in order to count as research, the process should also meet the twin strictures of reliability and validity. Key questions for establishing the reliability and validity of research are set out below.

Questions for establishing the reliability and validity of a study

Type	Key Question
Internal reliability	Would an independent researcher, on reanalysing the data, come to the same conclusion?
External reliability	Would an independent researcher, on replicating the study, come to the same conclusion?
Internal validity	Is the research design such that we can confidently claim that the outcomes are a result of the experimental treatment?
External validity	Is the research design such that we can generalise beyond the subjects under investigation to a wider population?

[Source: D. Nunan. 1992. *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press.]

While I would argue that any research needs to be reliable, the issue of validity is more problematic. If one is not trying to establish a relationship between variables, but (for example) to describe and interpret phenomena in context, does the imperative to demonstrate that one has safeguarded one's research from threats to internal validity remain? By the same token, if one is not trying to argue from samples to populations, then it would not be unreasonable to assert that external validity is irrelevant. I would argue that as most action research is not concerned with arguing from samples to populations, external validity is not at issue.

An alternative agenda for research

It is popularly assumed that the purpose of research is to test theories. For example, "That communicative language teaching is more effective than audiolingualism". Allwright and Bailey have pointed out that there are problems with this proposition. In the first place, some theories are untestable (for example, Krashen's attestations on 'subconscious' acquisition). Secondly, classrooms are too complex for us to control all the variables in the manner prescribed by experimental research. They propose an alternative purpose for research, namely to try and understand and deal with immediate practical problems facing teachers and learners (Allwright and Bailey 1991). If we accept this alternative purpose, we are drawn immediately into embracing action research, because it makes no sense for an outsider to arbitrate on the practical problems facing teachers and learners. This does not mean that outsiders, such as university based researchers, have no role to play in practitioner-based research. However, the role is one of collaboration and advice rather than direction and control.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this brief piece by suggesting that in order to understand why a great deal of educational research is ignored or dismissed by practitioners, we need to appreciate the following facts:

- all too often teachers are conceived of as consumers rather than co-producers of research;
- too much research addresses questions which are considered irrelevant or peripheral to most practitioners;
- too little research is directed at the immediate practical problems of teachers and learners;
- too much research is carried out in controlled, laboratory contexts which renders their outcomes irrelevant to the classroom.

Until these conditions change, the gap between research and practice will remain. In fact, Fine (1987:172) says it all when he asserts that:

> The process of conducting research within schools to identify words that could have been

said, talk that should have been nurtured, and information that needed to be announced, suffers from voyerism and perhaps the worst of post hoc arrogance. The researcher's sadistic pleasure of spotting another teacher's collapsed contradiction, aborted analysis, or silencing sentence was moderated only by the ever present knowledge that similar analytic surgery could easily be performed on my own classes.

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Research In Your Own Classroom

Elizabeth Taylor

How might I become interested in investigating my own classroom?

Teachers want to know about their classrooms on several levels. At the most practical level you are interested in everyday matters, such as whether the learners work better seated around tables in small groups or as a whole class led by the teacher. At a more theoretical level you might wonder what second language acquisition research has to say about whether increasing interaction in the target language by using small groups promotes learning, or what classroom research says about patterns of interaction and roles adopted by learners in small group settings.

How might I make these links between practice and theory?

At the daily practical level you might notice that some of your learners adopt "teacher-like" roles when grouped with others, and some rarely speak at all in groups, but follow the lead of the others. Does this matter? you wonder. Some activities seem to get students talking, while others don't. What are their characteristics? If you believe mixed-language groupings produce the most amount of negotiation, does it matter what the composition of these groups are? After some time you may want to find out whether there are any other teachers who have noticed similar patterns, successes or problems in the way learners are grouped. At this point you may have a casual chat about it in the staffroom and ideas shared might get put into practice.

The next level might be when you generalise from your own and colleagues' experiences to the broader context of second language teaching generally and wonder what the reasons behind the apparently more successful class groupings might be. Your own learning style will probably then determine what you do next! Those of you who prefer to learn from colleagues and from talking over problems and issues might raise the topic when several teachers meet informally. If your institution has regular meetings devoted to curriculum and methodology issues, this could be an appropriate forum, although the luxury of discussing other than the most pressing needs at such a meeting could be a thing of the past in many workplaces. Research on professional development in the adult literacy and basic education field (Davison et al. forthcoming) shows that unless such sessions are formalised, it is largely a matter of luck as to whether teachers find themselves working with colleagues who will get involved in talking over classroom issues.

Those of you who are more print-oriented, however, might think that there might be something useful written up in journals or any of the resources in a library, so you have a look through these. This reveals that there are in fact a few books which seem very useful (Nunan 1989, Malamah-Thomas 1987, Wright 1988). On browsing through books like these you find how other people have gone about investigating the same problem you are interested in. You also find that the last section of all the books in the Oxford series, of which Malamah-Thomas and Wright form a part, has some very clearly explained ideas on how to investigate your own classroom.

Collaborate or go it alone?

Whether you have talked your ideas over with your colleagues or looked through some articles or books, you have decided you'd like to know more. At this stage is it best to go ahead alone or with others? As we noted above, people have different ways of working and learning and you may be quite happy to go ahead on your own. If you decide you would prefer to work collaboratively, however, this could be easier for you. You may simply work informally with just one colleague or try to set up a small group where you teach (or study). If you are currently following a formal course of study in TESOL, LOTE or language and literacy, or in education generally, it will probably be quite feasible to undertake a small classroom research project as an assignment for your course. Talk it over with your lecturer.

Setting up a small group at your workplace has its practical difficulties, but you may find a couple of other interested people. Arrange a regular meeting time and read on.

What have other researchers found out about my area of interest?

Although there may not be much time for reading, you feel someone may already have found out quite a lot about learner groupings in second language classrooms, and it seems a pity not to check this first so that you can either follow the same procedures they did and see if the same things happen in your classroom too, or get some ideas to try something new of your own. So what should you read?

One problem with a great deal of classroom research which has been reported in international journals such as *TESOL Quarterly* and collections of second language acquisition or classroom research (such as Allwright and Bailey 1991, Chaudron 1988, van Lier 1988) is that many are carried out by a researcher from outside and therefore don't provide examples of people studying their own or a colleague's classroom. Reading about these studies will still be very useful to you, however, both in terms of what was found out and how the researchers went about their task. You need to keep in mind, though, that these studies will be of research projects far larger than you would hope to carry out and so it is useful and interesting to read reports of research done by other teachers as well. The main difference between the major studies and the type of study we are interested in here is that you may only look at one class, possibly only one lesson, and are not looking for the large numbers to make your research statistically viable and thus generalisable to other contexts. You are interested, at least to begin with, in a single context, your own.

While the more "formal" reports have the disadvantage of describing larger and more ambitious research projects, they have the advantage of being models of how to write up research clearly. The "informal" ones have the advantage of seeming closer to reality but the disadvantage of being often less well-explained, due to teachers' inexperience of reporting back in written format. Elsewhere in this journal you will find reports of research done by teachers These combine the best of both worlds - small, achievable projects and written up clearly for the reader.

How do I go about investigating my own classroom?

A practical example: learner roles in small group interaction compared with a teacher-directed lesson.

Focusing the investigation

The best way to see how a question can be asked and investigated is to examine the process one teacher followed with her adult ESL literacy community class which she had been teaching for about two years. The teacher, Anne, had realised that her lessons seemed to be very teacher-directed. This was very largely influenced by the learning styles and experiences of her students. They expected that teaching should come from the teacher and it was the learners' role to receive instruction. There was very little learner-learner interaction in the class, even though it was very small - 6 to 8 students. Anne was also concerned that the students were not developing learning strategies and, in particular, did not see themselves as independent readers in English. She knew from her reading that increasing learner-learner interaction was thought to be beneficial, but could not find much research done on differences between learner roles in small groups as compared with teacher-fronted groups. She therefore decided to investigate these roles in her own class.

Anne's background reading told her that in second language learning, group work is considered effective for several reasons: it increases actual participation and thus language learning opportunities; it improves the quality, or naturalness, of student talk, so that it is closer to "genuine" interaction; it helps individualise instruction; it promotes a positive affective climate; and it increases student motivation (Long and Porter 1985, McPherson 1992, van Lier 1988). Second language acquisition research also suggests that negotiation of meaning (which is better carried out in more "natural" smaller groups) actually may lead to acquisition of the target language. As far as learner roles in small groups are concerned, Anne found that small groups encouraged learners to take on new roles which they may not have done in a teacher-fronted lesson. For instance, they may initiate more interaction instead of simply responding to the teacher.

Collecting information

The next step for Anne was to collect information in her classroom so that she could examine learner roles. She decided that because one of her concerns was for the students to develop more independent reading strategies that she would use a reading-based task to focus on. They had already worked on pre-reading strategies for understanding the content of new texts, so she set up two activities, one teacher-fronted and one small group, so that she could compare roles in these. In the teacher-fronted session Anne attempted to elicit from the students the use of the four cues they had previously studied and then to apply these to the text in that lesson. These cues were:

1. Looking at pictures/illustrations
2. Looking at the title
3. Looking at headings
4. Looking for easily recognized words in the body of the text.

In the small group session the learners' task was to a) predict what the reading would be about and b) say what they did to try to work this out - in other words, to discuss their strategies. The texts Anne chose were two segments of the same government pamphlet on the environment.

The class was very small, so Anne had only two small groups and she intentionally grouped these in mixed levels, since the class had a wide range of proficiency in both oral and literacy skills and she felt the mixed groupings reflected reality in community classes.

Anne audiotaped about 15 - 20 minutes of each session. This gave her plenty of material to work with.

Analysing the information

Unfortunately, once you have a tape, you need to transcribe it! Anne ended up transcribing about 8 pages of interaction for each session. This is very time-consuming but also very revealing. You may find other aspects of the lesson you might like to follow up in the future by doing this. Anne transcribed by hand, but you may find you can get access to a transcription machine, which is a tape-player with a headset and a foot-pedal. This allows you to type with two hands and review the tape by using your foot.

The best way to analyse your transcription is to see how other people have done it. Some kind of framework and terminology is important in order to communicate to others what you have found interesting. You can of course invent your own framework and categories for analysis or adapt what someone else has done and this is what many teachers investigating their classrooms for their own purposes have done.

Anne analysed the roles her learners took in the two lessons by looking at four broad categories of roles: *leader, participator, non-participator and negative contributor*. (A *participator* was interpreted as someone who contributed to the group discussion but deferred to a leader.) Anne based this on work done by Orlich et al. (1990). These four categories were further sub-divided into three ways in which these roles may be oriented in the group. These were *task roles* (focusing on the task, eg. initiating, asking questions); *maintenance roles* (focusing on maintaining group processes, eg. encouraging, giving feedback, commenting on progress); and *self-serving roles* (tending to obstruct discussion by serving the learner's own interests, eg. blocking others' contributions, off-task comments).

Anne used her transcripts to code the learners' utterances firstly into the functions they were performing (eg. encouraging), then allocated these to the role they were fulfilling (eg. maintenance). She found there were no non-participators and no negative contributors, so she counted the number of times each learner filled the role of leader or participator and what aspect of the role was being carried out (eg. task, maintenance).

Making sense of it

Anne had made some predictions before starting her study. One was that the learners who actively contribute in the teacher-fronted group will assume leadership roles in a small learner-centred group. This turned out to be the case.

She found that in the teacher-fronted lesson, not surprisingly, that the learners adopted the role of leader only 10% of the time but in the small groups roughly a quarter to a third of the time was spent with learners adopting the role of leader. In both the teacher-fronted session and the small group one the learners were strongly task-oriented rather than maintenance-oriented, although one group was a little more concerned than the other with the latter function.

This looks as if Anne was only counting utterances and describing her results in terms of percentages. Although there is no space to show the detail here, Anne , because of the small size of her class, was able to describe and discuss how each student contributed in the small group activity, supported by quotes from her transcript. For instance, she found that one student took on a very strong "teacher" role in the small group discussion. This student (with an ASLPR reading level of 4 and with a tertiary education background) took on the role of "instructing" the others in reading strategies. However, in teacher-fronted sessions he does not do this and Anne speculates that *this may have been due to his awareness of his greater ability and his desire not to dominate a class which he attends mainly for social reasons rather than learning needs.* In a small group, because of all the learners' strong task orientation, this student would not have expected to learn from the others and took on the only role he saw himself able to fulfil due to his view of what education was about, that of "teacher":

> *First you look at the picture, then you read the heading, the title and everything and you tell me what it will be about. First the picture...Here...What is it?*

Both his past educational experiences and those of the other members of the group enabled him to take on this role, since they were happy to defer to him (*thank you for helping me read; you are a good teacher*) are examples from their discussion). It was interesting that in the other group the student who took on the role of "leader" did not do it by instructing, but by offering information and controlling the discussion: *Don't spend too much water. How to do?* was how she initiated discussion on the topic of saving water they had read about in the brochure.

The fact that the groups did not pay much attention to maintaining group cohesion was seen by Anne as a sign of their inexperience at working in groups, but also because they already knew each other well and had a good rapport with their fellow students.

How can research in my own classroom help my teaching?

How did all this help Anne in planning for and teaching the class in the future? She was able to see that even though there may be more interaction going on in small groups, a wide disparity in learner background, particularly in level of education, may result in some learners continuing to adopt "participant" roles, responding to the "teacher" orientation of the most highly-educated and most proficient member of the group. Is this a reason to abandon groupwork? Probably not - learners will have more chances to participate in small groups, even if roles remain static initially. Experimentation with group composition would be interesting. Maybe Anne could try grouping the "leaders" together and see what happens next time.

An important discovery for Anne was the effect of the nature of the task itself. She found in follow-up discussion to the task with the students (which was also recorded and transcribed) that the highly-educated student was in fact the only one to grasp the "learning-to-learn" focus of the activity. The others concentrated on understanding the reading text but not on the strategies they had studied for approaching it:

Teacher: *OK!...What did you think it was about?*

S1: *the water...you soap, you use then the water. You have to take less time in the shower...*

Teacher: *What did this group think it was about?*

S2: *Shower, washing.*

Teacher: *Yes...tell me about all of it...not just the little bits...what do you think the whole thing was about?*

S3: *For shower...(discussion continues about details of content of text)*

Teacher: *Yes. You're telling me this is all about saving water - how did you know it was all about saving water?*

S4 ("teacher"): *We look at the picture. We look at the words to see if we know something about them?*

It seems that Anne was right to decide that her learners need to be more independent in their reading strategies if they are ever to see themselves as "readers" in English. She may now be able to recycle activities which focus on conscious awareness of reading strategies and feel it is quite all right to "overdo" this, since continuous reinforcement is probably important for the majority of the class who have primary school backgrounds only.

How do I report my findings?

If Anne wants to inform colleagues or other second language teachers about her study, how could she go about it? If, as noted earlier, you are working as a team in your institution or through other informal grouping arrangements, presenting your findings as an informal talk with time for discussion at a staff development session would be the best way to do this. You will find that you are so familiar with what you have done by now that talking about it will be easy! Simple charts or tables of findings are useful as overhead transparencies or handouts and a copy of the actual transcript will always create interest and promote discussion. This is especially important if you are trying to involve staff members who are not particularly enthusiastic about professional development. A concrete example of the students and teacher interacting works very well (accompanied by an audio or videotape would be even better). You will find that far more issues than the one you originally were addressing will arise.

If you are enrolled in a formal course, approach your lecturer about arranging ways for students to present their work. There may already be some kind of forum for this but if not, new arrangements can be negotiated. It is unfortunate that in most formal courses, assignments are done after the course has finished and are then only reading material for the person marking it. If you have good feedback on your assignment, however, consider rewriting in article format and sending it to an appropriate journal.

Acknowledgments

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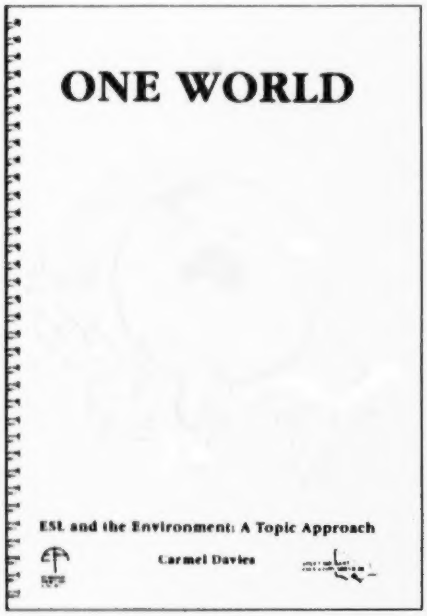
ONE WORLD : ESL AND THE ENVIRONMENT - A Topic Approach

by Carmel Davies

One World is a workbook and cassette package for adult and adolescent learners of English as a second language. It aims to provide information on environmental issues while at the same time providing a meaningful context for language teaching and learning. Activities include comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, listening, pronunciation and graph interpretation. Many of the activities can be used at different levels in the classroom or the Individual Learning Centre. *One World* is published by AMES and the Environment Protection Authority.



ONE WORLD

ESL and the Environment: A Topic Approach

Carmel Davies

AMES

Language and Literacy Specialists

Assessing writing skills of secondary students - the process and the product

Helen Wren and Sandra Alcorn

Creating an accurate, valid and reliable tool for the comprehensive assessment of the language skills of secondary-aged students in Australian educational institutions is a highly complex process. This article describes a project to revise the Language Proficiency Rating (LPR) Scale for evaluating student writing conducted in Northern Sydney between 1989 and 1991. Four secondary Intensive English Language Centres (IELCs) and fifteen High Schools participated in the project. Since then, projects such as the NLLIA ESL Bandscales and the CURASS National ESL Scales have been developed. While the LPR Scale may have to some extent been superseded by these developments, we believe the revision process is useful, and therefore should be documented.

Introduction

For a number of years Intensive English Language Centres (IELCs) in Northern Sydney have made use of a language proficiency rating scale (LPRS) for initial placement, promotion through the language-graded classes in the Centres and for reporting to receiver high schools on the language proficiency of graduating students in the four macro skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

In the 1984 version of the language proficiency rating scale, assessment criteria included features such as number or type of words used, correct usage or otherwise of clauses, the use of connectives, vocabulary, the accuracy of spelling, punctuation and sentence patterns. Complaints about the inadequacies of the existing scale had been made for some time, so it was obvious that a way needed to be found for making this scale more relevant to the needs of learners and teachers.

Moreover, the LPRScale needed review because a significant increase in New Arrival secondary students enrolling in the Northern Sydney area in 1988-89 had led to the establishment of two new IELCs. Uniformity of assessment standards within and between the region's IELCs was needed, in order to provide an objective description of Language other than English (LOTE) Background students ' language skills relative to their English-speaking background (ESB) peers. It was hoped that more accurate and consistent information on IELC graduates, based on a revised scale, could then be provided to receiving high schools.

In mid-1989, Liz Hamp-Lyons of the University of Michigan presented an ATESOL (NSW) Saturday seminar on Writing Assessment and Diagnostic Feedback. During the follow-up to the seminar, IELC senior teachers discussed the need for regular consultation by classroom teachers on standardising criteria for evaluating student writing.

A LPRScale Review was therefore planned with a conference of Consultants, IELC and high school staff organised to review the rating scale for writing. It was to be an opportunity to bring IELC and mainstream teachers together in a common task of devising a continuum of writing achievement.

The process

Year 9 students are a pivotal group in both IELCs and high schools. By age 15 most high school students are expected to use an appropriate style or 'genre' in completing assignments . Therefore the writing of mainstream, ESL and IELC Year 9 classes provided the data for the research. Any findings from this age group could be related to other high school age groups and writing levels.

The Head Teacher English, a teacher of Year 9 Geography, and ESL teachers from six high schools and the four IELCs were invited to participate at the first conference. Year 9 students in English classes from these schools had been asked to complete the writing task 'Explain the statement: "Pollution is spoiling our environment"'.The picture prompt provided showed a tree-lined stream with ducks swimming in it, beside which was the notice:

WARNING:
DO NOT DRINK
BATHE OR PLAY
IN THESE WATERS
POLLUTION

A time limit of ten minutes preparation and thirty minutes writing was given to the students.

English teachers at each of the six high schools rated the completed essays from A to E, and selected twelve writing samples from Year 9 classes in their schools to represent the range of ability levels. These were forwarded to the organisers who combined them with samples from the more advanced language students in IECs. To cater for the differing standards between schools, the 72 high school and 48 IEC samples were read by the organisers and sorted into five grades of A to E.

Six different sets of six essays representing different proficiency levels were created for use at the Conference held in October 1989 - " Assessing language skills of secondary NESB students".

- To work towards a common understanding of levels of written language expected for Year 9 students in high Schools and ILECs
- To evaluate existing assessment criteria used in high schools and ILECs
- To document sample writing for reference in rating students.
- To identify the difficulties involved in describing language skills for the development of rating scale in the context of the "Writing K-12" policy document

The process used during the conference day was significant. Delegates were asked to form six groups of five teachers to include IELC, ESL and mainstream representatives. Each group was given a different set of essays from which all identifying and grading details had been removed. Individual members of the group read each essay and gave it a mark out of 20, with comments justifying the score recorded on a result sheet. When each person had rated the essays, the group conferred and produced a common rating and summary of comments for each essay. In the plenary session, the results and comments were collated.

Information about the language background of the writers and the grading given by the conference organisers was then provided. Participants expressed surprise at the range of scores given for the same essay. They also commented that it was easy to identify the writing of LOTE Background students, some of whom benefited from a 'halo effect' (ie marks were not deducted for deficiencies in language use). Agreement was reached on the scores (represented by ratings A-E).

"Participants expressed surprise at the range of scores given for the same essay."

Participants then reassembled in their groups and wrote descriptors for each of the five grades which were then presented to the whole conference. In the evaluation discussion of the conference, participants commented on the value of the contact between mainstream and ESL teachers and of being made more aware of the problems associated with the objective assessment of writing. After the conference these descriptors were used to construct the first version of the draft Language Proficiency Rating Scale (LPRS) for writing

The next part of the review process was to organise working parties made up of language teachers at IELCs to write descriptors for the writing of new arrival Year 9 students. These descriptors related to the lower levels of the combined writing scale. Accordingly, early in 1990, all IEC students, numbering more than 300 in the four northern IEL centres, completed the same writing task on 'pollution' which had been used for the October 1989 conference. It was thought that the same task should be given in spite of some students' lack of vocabulary and factual discourse writing skills. A set of descriptors was then compiled for the lower end of the scale at various conferences of IELC teachers.

The draft LPR Scale completed in mid-1990, with multiple descriptors on each of fourteen points on the scale, was thought to be cumbersome when trialled at the IEL centres and some participating high schools. However, it was felt that the proper procedure for making adjustments to the Scale was to create a similar forum to that which had operated at the initial conference. At this second conference, participants included the English Head Teacher and ESL teachers from fifteen high schools as well as teachers from the four northern Sydney IELCs.

"It was felt that the proper procedure for making adjustments to the Scale was to create a similar forum to that which had operated at the initial conference."

The aim of the second conference, held in late 1990, was to provide a forum to introduce the draft Writing Assessment Scale developed from the first conference on Assessing Language Skills, and to evaluate its potential effectiveness. The participants worked with the draft scale in two workshop sessions. In the first workshop, they were asked to work in groups of six to assess a set of seven essays chosen from the upper range of ability levels. Each set of essays was to exemplify various levels on the draft scale. In addition, each essay was used in more than one group in order to test the reliability of the scale. In the second workshop, the process was repeated, using essays from the lower range. In this workshop, some overlap was deliberately created to test whether there was continuity in the scale.

During the plenary session, the reliability of the scale appeared to be validated. The overwhelming majority of essays had been rated within a range of one level on the scale e.g. from 0.5 below a rating to 0.5 above. The revised LPRScale was pronounced to be an invaluable assessment tool. However, the participating teachers thought that the number of points and multiple descriptors on it still made it rather unwieldy. They recommended that the format be improved, and that the scale should be produced on one A4 page.

The next review of the draft LPRScale was completed as part of preparation for a workshop at the ACTA/ATESOL Summer School in Sydney in January 1991. Mindful of comments from the previous conference, the scale was reduced from fifteen to ten levels, and essays selected to exemplify each level. On reviewing the descriptors, based on previous analysis by the coordinating team, it was found they fell into five categories : Task Understanding, Organisation, Content, Vocabulary, Language Use, and Mechanics. These headings were used to rearrange the scale into a grid format.

New sets of essays were prepared for the ATESOL workshop and the procedure used at previous conferences was repeated. Once again the reliability of the scale was shown with similar results to those achieved at the 1990 conference. None of the delegates had been part of the review process and none were familiar with the previous writing rating scale. All expressed interest in either using the scale themselves or in using the process as a basis for developing something similar with their colleagues.

The product - *the Language Proficiency Rating Scale for Writing and its uses*

The latest version of the LPR Scale for Writing (1991) which was developed from this process is the outcome of suggestions from all those who have participated in its production and those who have attempted to use it in its various forms. A major concern was to create a scale which was easy to use and which provided the range of features likely to be present in student writing at a particular level. As a result of the experiences of teachers using the various drafts of the scale, an initial analysis was made of the types of descriptors formulated.

In order to present the scale on an easy-reference A4 page, a grid format was devised, as below for rating 1.0. The position of the categories on the grid reflects the relative importance of each.

Rating	Task understanding	Organisation	Content	Vocabulary	Language use and mechanics
1	Weak attempt at task	May be disjointed	Evidence of concept in L1. May be very short	Appears to be translation from L1	Considerable interference in communication of ideas. May be disjointed. Verb tenses usually limited to present.

The complete version of the scale and sample essays and ratings are included in the project report. Details of its availability are provided at the end of this article (1).

It should be noted that each descriptor on the LPRScale will not necessarily apply to a piece of writing at a particular level on the scale. For example, descriptors from one or more categories at differing levels may be appropriate for one piece of writing. An assessor needs to consult adjacent points on the scale in order to determine at which level the majority of descriptors apply to the piece of writing. It may be that the work could be more accurately assessed as falling between levels on the scale, in which case a 0.5 rating is suggested.

The essays included as samples in the project report have been chosen to exemplify the writing at each level of the LPRScale. To ensure the scale's reliability, it is important that these essays be used consistently as reference points, particularly in the first stages of using the LPRS as an assessment tool. In addition, the selected essays can used as a standard of comparison and are a useful tool for use in collaborative assessment of student writing. They could also be used as models for training assessors.

Looking back from 1993

With the benefit of hindsight, many teachers on the project team recognise that trying to achieve such a goal, with limited research facilities and resources, was over-ambitious. This fact is even more evident in the light of the findings of the NLLIA ESL Development Project and the CURASS National ESL Scales. The project's soon to be published scales are descriptions of learner progress in ESL in the school context. While the LPRScale is currently in everyday use in some IELCs, this may change with the advent of the national bandscales.

Intervening national developments notwithstanding, the process of review of the Language Proficiency Rating Scale for Writing in Northern Sydney schools achieved a number of purposes:

- it enabled the teachers in IELCs to more accurately assess students in relation to normed standards of native speaking students writing at Year 9 in high school;
- it provided an opportunity for IELC teachers and their counterparts in the mainstream receiver schools to develop their understanding of the specific writing and literacy needs of students at both ends of the proficiency writing scale;
- it assisted IELC, ESL and mainstream teachers to be more accurate and thoughtful about their reasons for assessment and gave them some objective criteria and standards on which to judge their students' writing. In particular, it cautioned teachers against judging their students' writing solely on mechanics and language, at the expense of its communicative purpose.

However, in spite of these achievements of the LPRScale for writing, there are a number of questions and issues raised by the Revised Scale development process which remain unaddressed. These include the need for:

- a mechanism for regular training of users of the scale;
- a process for reviewing the assessment scales for the other macro skills of reading, speaking and listening;
- production of comprehensive scales for the other macro skills which are compatible with this scale.
- assessment tasks which relate to the levels of proficiency on the scale for initial testing and placement of new arrival students into IELC or ESL or mainstream classes;
- associated assessment tasks for internal IELC placement and promotion, for measuring course outcomes, and for indicating readiness for graduation to mainstream classes;
- revision of the 'Exit Report' format from IELC to receiving high schools, using the LPRScale to indicate language skills proficiency;
- information for mainstream teachers in receiving high schools;
- examination of the descriptive criteria and exemplar models of writing in the light of current linguistic theory (2).

The Language Scale review conducted in northern Sydney secondary schools attempted to create a valid and reliable writing proficiency scale for 'beginning learners of English up to advanced mainstream levels' in Year 9. In our view this was a unique attempt to develop mainstream teacher awareness of the levels of writing achievement of ESL students at each stage in the process of learning English. In addition, it provided ESL teachers (particularly those in IELCs) with models of student writing and an understanding of the expectations of mainstream teachers.

Measurement of secondary students' writing necessitates the use of language proficiency ratings or bandscales for assessment and placement of students in an ESL program. Such assessment can also assist educational decision-makers in allocating specialist ESL services, as proficiency in English outweighs all other factors as the best single indicator of need for ESL support services. Notwithstanding the need for further research, the revised version of the LPRScale for writing has proved to be a useful tool for teachers in evaluating ESL and mainstream Year 9 student writing.

(1) NSW Department of School Education , Metropolitan North Region, New Arrivals Program. For a full description of this LPRwriting Scale Project send for the 1992 publication by the NSW Department of School Education: "A writing assessment scale: the process and the product" by Sandra Alcorn and Helen Wren; Contact: Met North Regional Office, P.O Box 450, Hornsby. 2077 NSW - the New Arrivals Program consultant tel: (02) 477-0111 fax: (02) 476-1211

(2) I have recently analysed five of the texts used (as sample pieces of student writing in the Draft Language Proficiency Rating Scale for Writing) with reference to 'genre theory'. Using models of writing culled from student performance may not always, it would seem, provide consistency of levels in all skills to warrant a text being ranked above or below another text on the scale.
Because the descriptors on the Draft LPRS are derived directly from English /ESL teacher-feedback in workshop situations there is a certain 'literary' view of what constitutes good writing in the Scale criteria which has tended to advantage native speaker texts (from the sample essays) against well-structured ESL texts with some grammatical faults. HW

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Research in the early years

Priscilla Clarke

The preschool sector (children birth-5 years of age) is one of the most important areas for early education. In Victoria, 94% of children have experienced preschool education in a range of settings including kindergarten, long day care and family day care. However, those interested in researching English as a second language, early literacy for non-English speaking background children and bilingual development, rarely consider these vital first five years in funding special programs, or in undertaking research.

The Free Kindergarten Association Multicultural Resource Centre is actively seeking research funds to extend its research projects and publications in these areas. However, apart from the funds which were given under the Second Language Learning Program (DEET) in 1991, little seems to be available to continue the work already underway.

Bilingual preschool and child care

During 1991-2 the FKA Multicultural Resource Centre was funded for a national research project under the Australian Second Language Learning Program (DEET) This project was undertaken by Dr. Rosemary Milne and Priscilla Clarke of the Multicultural Resource Centre. The project was aimed at developing policies, guidelines and models for child care and preschool programs that would foster the development of linguistic skills in young children with a first language other than English; do this in ways that ensure both the maintenance and development of the first language AND the learning of English; and demonstrate practices that are appropriate for young children in all areas of their development.

The project arose from a belief that services for children below school age play a vital role in ensuring the continuation and development of the first language and the learning of the second language.

Victoria and South Australia have the most extensive involvement in bilingual programs for young children. As part of the children's services program, the Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLGCS) has funded a number of bilingual/bicultural child care centres, sponsored by ethnic groups. At the present time, ethnic sponsored child care centres in Victoria cover the following language groups: Arabic, Greek, Vietnamese, Chinese, Spanish, Turkish, Italian, Serbian, Croatian and Macedonian.

In Australia, school entry is at approximately five years of age. Child care is not part of the school system and, in some states, preschools and kindergartens are also not part of the formal school system. Information does not always flow across systems. Even the most recent Australian Language Levels Guidelines (McKay and Scarino 1991) do not show sufficient appreciation of the amount of first and second language acquisition that may have taken place in preschool or child care programs before children enter school.

Data for this research project was collected in three child care centres with Greek, Arabic and Vietnamese/Chinese bilingual programs. A number of different bilingual models were observed. Information was also received from other states of Australia, and a number of programs in South Australia were also visited.

Bilingual programs ranged from highly structured to less structured, mixed age groupings and separate age groupings; simultaneous exposure to two or more languages and separate exposure. All centres adopted the policy of one person one language and both languages appeared to have equal weighting.

Results from all the bilingual programs that took part in the study showed that bilingual developmentally appropriate programs can provide excellent environments for the maintenance and development of the first language and the development of English as a second language. Assessment of the development of the first language and English as a second language showed that many of the children developed both their first language and their English as a second language to an age appropriate level.

This research project has shown the value of bilingual programs in the early years. However, it has highlighted the lack of funds available for funding bilingual preschool and child care programs. Few funds have been available prior to this project to evaluate the effects of these programs, or to assist early childhood organizations to develop policies and models that could provide guidelines for the establishment and development of such programs. Some funds have been provided for ESL support in schools and for the funding of Languages Other than English (LOTE) programs in schools. However, bilingual development in the years prior to school entry has been little appreciated (recently, the Victorian Government has discontinued the funding of the few bilingual programs in Victorian Kindergartens).

The failure to recognize that many children are developing their bilingual skills from a very early age, has also meant that a considerable number of NESB children who attend mainstream preschool or child care programs have had to develop English in isolation from the maintenance of their first language.

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Paper presented at World Conference of OMEP. Arizona.

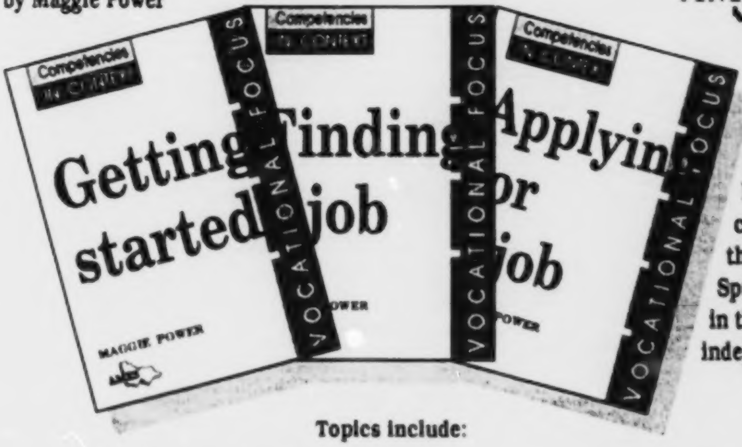
The full report of the research project is available for $16.95 + postage from the FKA Multicultural Resource Centre. 1st Floor, 9-11 Stewart St. Richmond. Vic.

The FKA Multicultural Resource Centre is a Resource and Training Agency funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health, Housing Local Government and Community Services to provide support for staff working in children's services. The early childhood consultancy, bilingual support, and training are available for those working with children in community based child care, family day care, private sector child care and preschool. However, the library is available to the general community. A large range of bilingual materials for children and parents, ESL material, and background and cultural information is available for sale. A catalogue is available on request. The centre is open from 9-5pm Monday to Friday.

***Priscilla Clarke** is the Director of the Free Kindergarten Association Multicultural Resource Centre*

COMPETENCIES IN CONTEXT
by Maggie Power

AMES
Language and Literacy Specialists



Competencies in Context is a series of teaching and learning materials designed for adults studying English as a second language in Australia. The material is competency oriented, providing linkages to the nationally accredited Certificate in Spoken and Written English. Suitable for use in the classroom and by students studying independently.

Topics include:

- describing past work experience
- planning for future employment goals
- recognition of qualifications
- preparing a resume
- reading job advertisements
- contacting employers
- telephoning for an interview
- filling in application forms
- writing covering letters
- handling job interviews

"I think they will be popular with teachers and learners as they are so attractive, clearly set out and should be easy to incorporate into the competency based curriculum. The materials appear logically organised and allow for steady progression towards more demanding tasks." Sandra Gollin, Assistant Co-ordinator, Professional Development, National Centre English Language Teaching and Research.

TESOL Trendsetters

Professional development through classroom research

Lilli Lipa interviews Michael Breen

Int. **What is teacher research?**

M.B.: It may be helpful to begin to answer this by addressing the question: What is research? I think it can be fairly described as an extension of our day-to-day curiosity. Its purpose is to help us to understand things more clearly, to reduce our uncertainty, and, thereby, become better informed and more inclined not to assume things are what they appear to be at first glance. In essence, doing research in the classroom is being much more methodically reflective about what happens there.

Now, to return to the question. In terms of the procedures or investigatory methods used, teacher research should be no different from other kinds of research which we normally associate with people in universities or with project officers of ministries or other educational policy making organisations. A joint conspiracy, sometimes perpetuated by academic researchers and teachers from their different perspectives, is that research is much more closely related to theory than it is to practice. But, our actions are surely informed by our thinking and vice versa. Research, in turn, refines both.

> **"In essence, doing research in the classroom is being much more methodically reflective about what happens there."**

The distinctiveness of teacher research lies in who does the investigation and, quite often, the more immediate purposes of that investigation. The teacher is a participant researcher who has close experience of the situation and an immediate sensitivity to issues that are likely to deserve urgent clarification. This kind of research is often referred to as action research. Action research is described in more detail by Carr & Kemmis (1985) and helpful ideas for doing action research in the classroom context are provided by Nixon (1981), Walker (1985) and Hopkins (1985). If the reader is interested in specific comparisons between action research and other types of investigation, Brumfit and Mitchell (1990) is an informative source.

In addition to focusing upon particular questions or puzzles that confront the teacher in her daily work, perhaps one of the specific purposes of teacher research is the opportunity to reflect in a precise way upon classroom work for the good of one's own professional development. In other words, using research to pursue possibilities for more rewarding classroom experiences and for beneficial outcomes from these experiences for both teachers and students.

Int: **Is it realistic to expect teachers to undertake research?**

MB: I assume by this that you recognise that teachers are an overworked profession. I agree that teachers are confronted by the exceptionally demanding task of enabling people to learn, when success is sometimes hidden and the difficulties all too clear. But teachers are also exceptionally evaluative of themselves and this can intensify the inevitable stresses of managing other people's learning process in a classroom situation. I suggest that these very circumstances can be seen as justification for investigation within teachers' own work situations. Self-initiated research might, in fact, disentangle a number of things that are actually a source of stress. I am not proposing here that teacher research is a kind of self-therapy. But one initial step in professional development could be closer reflection along the lines suggested by Guy Claxton (1989) on one's own criteria for success in the classroom and the imperatives that drive us as teachers.

A second point I would make here is that teacher research is probably best not done alone. In the late 70s, I worked with Danish teachers of modern languages who wanted to undertake action research. We discovered that each teacher was more likely to be less critical of her own work in classrooms, more likely to undertake a manageable and genuinely informative investigation, and much more likely to see it through if she worked with a colleague in her own school and was part of a small team of other teachers in her locality who were doing their own investigations. These circumstances made researching manageable in addition to being both individually and collectively rewarding. The teachers also benefited from sharing the process of doing classroom research with their own students as co-researchers. In turn, student participation facilitated greater awareness of, and responsibility for their language learning process.

Int: **Is teacher research too small scale, too lacking in rigour to make a difference?**

M.B.: I think this depends upon which particular research you are referring to. A teacher or small group of teachers are more likely to complete an investigation in the classroom to the extent that they can discover something useful if it IS a small scale study. Because teachers are critically aware of the complexities of classroom work they may begin by trying to find too many answers to too many questions. This relates to the second part of your question. I suggest it is better to aim for rigour or clarity of focus and precision in how to go about the investigation rather than a study that tries to answer too many questions or deal with a complexity of issues. Small scale research which is well done is likely to be valuable both for the people directly involved and more informative to the wider professional community.

I am suggesting that well planned and carefully undertaken small scale studies, from which the outcomes are publicly shared, WILL make a difference. They are likely to have a positive effect in two senses. First, and more obviously perhaps, we will learn more from each other about the teaching and learning process in different language classrooms. Second, as I have earlier suggested, the activity of doing a well planned and executed small scale study, preferably in the context of working collaboratively with an interested colleague or two, can be seen as a genuine means for one's own professional growth and well being. If we also involve our students in some kind of systematic reflective investigation during the language learning process which can inform and guide that process, then this may also make a positive difference to the immediate practicalities of classroom work.

Int: **How does the teacher begin? How can priority areas for teacher research be identified?**

M.B.: To put it bluntly, you begin from where you are at. In some senses, we as teachers are already engaged in a research process although we don't tend to recognise it as such. We have to choose materials and appropriate classroom activities and tasks, we have to make decisions about learner needs, about appropriate points of focus in our lessons, and about making the new language manageable for learning. And we have to identify learner difficulties and evaluate learner progress. Most of the time we make these decisions on the basis of experience and 'feel'. And we often do these things intuitively and sometimes almost unconsciously. But such decisions can always be better informed and refined. This is where classroom research serves an essential purpose.

"In some senses, we as teachers are already engaged in a research process although we don't tend to recognise it as such"

If you ask a group of teachers about the kinds of day to day problems or "puzzles" - to use Dick Allwright's term - that they confront in helping people to learn a language, a long list of issues readily emerges. (I have helped teachers to begin action research in a range of work situations from just this kind of starting point. David Nunan provides examples of teacher concerns in his paper in the Brumfit and Mitchell collection to which I earlier referred.)

Once you have identified an issue that you feel to be important in your daily work, the next crucial step is to reduce and refine it to a researchable question. By this I mean a question that is answerable and is explored through a carefully planned series of activities. These must include:

- Identifying all the possible ways of obtaining answers to the question and then selecting the best alternatives from these that WILL provide you with the data that you need.

- Finding out as best you can if someone else has worked on the same or similar question in another situation and learning from their efforts, mistakes, and discoveries.
- Keeping clear accounts of every major step you take during the process - through a journal, through any decision-making documentation (even backs of envelopes!), or through instruments you use such as classroom observation charts or questionnaires.
- A careful analysis of what you discover and, preferably, an analysis in which you seek the views of other people - colleagues sharing the project, your informants, and an interested outsider who is likely to raise helpful questions so that your analysis can be refined.
- Your own close evaluation of your investigation in which you explore both its achievements and its weak points and how it could be improved if you did it again.
- Sharing what you have done and what you have discovered with the wider professional community. This means writing up your study - however small scale - so that it is publishable in the local professional newsletters, or even national or international journals. (A reading of these can give you good ideas regarding how to set out a report of your study.)

The purpose here is not only to inform colleagues, but also to get feedback and, thereby, refine other studies you may wish to undertake in the future. More important, perhaps, is your own effort to be as explicit as you can about your investigation. This itself has a positive backwash upon your endeavours. And a criterion you can use here to guide your writing is that someone who reads your account should be able to undertake virtually the same investigation in a similar working situation following your procedures. In other words, your own study should be replicable. If trying to get your account published sounds too ambitious at first, sharing a written account of what you have done with a group of colleagues in your own school or community can serve the important purposes I have identified above in addition to providing helpful ideas in return. In fact, this is how a great deal of research first sees the light of day!

"More important, perhaps, is your own effort to be as explicit as you can about your investigation."

Now, for the busy teacher and the novice researcher all this probably sounds rather daunting. If the research is to be genuinely useful to yourself and beyond the walls of your own classroom, then these minimal steps seem to me essential. All the more reason, of course, for beginning in a collaborative way with a colleague or two! And there is also help at hand in terms of guides to undertaking research that offer plenty of ideas. For example, Allwright (1988) offers a rich overview of classroom observation studies; Sanderson (1983) and Peck (1988) provide interesting accounts of language teachers at work; Allwright & Bailey (1991) suggest a range of research procedures for the language classroom; while Cohen & Manion (3rd edition 1989) offer probably the most accessible overview of different ways of doing investigations of different types. Reading any one of these will help the teacher to clarify where and how to start.

In what I have said so far I may have begun to answer the second part of your question. I believe the priorities for a teacher's research lie within the day-to-day work of the classroom and especially those issues that need clarifying or resolving in some way. Another guide to giving priority to some question rather than others will be the teacher's own familiarity with what other teacher researchers and current classroom language research are presently grappling with. Many of the writers to whom I have previously referred will be helpful in indicating useful paths that are worth following. I believe that the teacher researcher can make a genuine contribution to the wider language learning research community. The practitioner often has a day to day, experientially informed perspective on issues that the university researcher may sometimes lack.

Int: **How can some sense of order, or striving in the same direction, be imposed on a multitude of little projects?**

MB: I wonder if this is likely to be true. While working with teachers who are keen to launch their own classroom based investigations, I have found that common areas of concern do keep emerging. Indeed, I think that the opposite tendency wherein a body of research appears to follow a regimented and dominant model and a specific theoretical imperative can become too exclusive and narrow. And this has happened from time to time in "mainstream" research in language learning. Our study of language teaching and learning in classrooms is in its infancy and it is a time, I believe, for diversity in the things we may explore and how we undertake our investigations. If we reflect upon the history of science, some of the most significant shifts in our understanding have been inspired by the eccentric and lateral thinker.

If what I have said so far about the importance of planning and care in launching and undertaking research in the classroom has not discouraged some people, I am strongly in support of "a multitude of little projects". Well-crafted small-scale studies are the seeds of more comprehensive and larger projects. Again, almost all research begins in this way.

I would add two qualifications on this issue of diversity, however. Work is already being done that has relevance for teachers and their orchestration of classroom language learning, and teachers may find such work as useful springboards for their own endeavours. Journals such as this one can be a source of ideas in this way and so, of course, are professional conferences both local and national. In our field we need much more replication of other people's investigations. A teacher could begin, therefore, by emulating a study someone else has done in her own work context to trace similarities and differences in what may be discovered. Modelling one's work on someone else's plan and procedures could be a smoother introduction to doing your own study.

"I am strongly in support of "a multitude of little projects".

My second point here relates to what I said earlier about collaborative work and the need to write an explicit account of an investigation. My previous experiences with teacher researchers suggests that good studies will be achieved if people work in pairs or in a small group on a common research question, even if they undertake the investigations separately in their own classrooms. This entails forming a network of interested colleagues who can meet to plan things together, to keep in touch with each other during the process, and eventually share what they have discovered. Even a small local network can provide both the necessary personal support when enthusiasm might be waning under other pressures. Equally important, perhaps, is the forum for an on-going dialogue that will help colleagues to continually refine what they are trying to do.

If the smaller network of even two or three people in the same school can then link into a wider local network, particularly if a newsletter for sharing accounts of classroom research can be initiated, then the likelihood of isolated teachers working on disparate questions that may not be of mutual benefit to the wider profession seems to me very unlikely.

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PracTESOL

Dictogloss - When the words get in the way

Anne Dunn

Since the publication of Ruth Wajnryb's "Grammar Workout" text in 1986 the dictogloss procedure has more or less taken ESL classrooms by storm. It's a problem-solving, communicatively-based procedure which acts both as a listening exercise and a grammatical consciousness-raiser. It does not involve extensive preparation on the teacher's part, and students and teachers seem to enjoy it and find it useful. No wonder then that it is so popular. However, in my own classroom, though I found many aspects of dictogloss worthwhile, several problems consistently arose.

The dictogloss procedure

For those who are unfamiliar with the process the students' task is to listen to a short passage or paragraph of about four or five sentences and jot down notes. The passage can be read from one of Wajnryb's books, or from the accompanying tape, or it can be constructed and read by the teacher. The passage is only played twice. (It is not dictation.) In small groups, the students then reconstruct the passage from "fragments of a battered text" (Wajnryb. 1988:13), using whatever pooled knowledge and strategies they possess. The aim is for students to produce a 'sound text' which contains all the main points. Their passages are then examined and corrected, focusing on the main points and grammar and the compared with the original.

The aim of the procedure

As described by Wajnryb (1990:11) the central aim of Dictogloss is "to develop learners' grammatical competence in using the language". It also aims to create a situation for students to notice the difference between what they have produced and what is correct in order to acquire grammatical competence (grammatical consciousness-raising).

The task has a strong communicative basis - the small group discussions can last for up to 30 minutes and involve authentic interaction and communication, based on a real task involving problem solving and information gaps.

The dictogloss technique also caters to a range of learning styles. Students who are motivated by problem-solving activities will benefit, as will those who prefer a more structured and organised approach. Students lacking confidence can practise production within a small group. The final piece of text produced is not 'owned' by any one individual, thus reducing the likelihood of embarrassment to any individual.

It would seem therefore, that the dictogloss technique is consistent with current SLA theory and, in practice, is a stimulating, communicative, consciousness-raising strategy, promoting an understanding of textual cohesiveness and syntactic relationships.

Dictogloss in practice

In my own classes, dictogloss was always a popular activity. I could see for myself that the students were actively engaged in problem solving and I could hear a great deal of language being generated from the task. Moreover the error correction stage was also felt by the students to be beneficial. However, my intuitive response to the results my students were producing in dictogloss exercises was that they were producing texts that were less grammatically competent than those they normally produced in writing classes.

Frequently students who were supposed to hand in a reconstructed passage from "fragments of a battered text" (Wajnryb 1988:13) handed in a passage with the 'battered fragments' inserted into 'sentences'. Often, these were sentences whose meaning the students themselves could not explain. Yet questioning in the error analysis stage had seemed to indicate that the students had indeed a global understanding of the meaning of the text and, in many cases, had a basic understanding of the meaning of the particular sentence which they had reconstructed so erratically.

The first few times I noticed this, I simply put it down to the fact that the students were still coming to grips with the process. We discussed the requirements of the task again and the class agreed that students were not expected to reconstruct the text exactly or even to use the same words in their version of the text, that what was important was that they include all the main points and construct a text 'with good grammar'. Further, that it was not the same as dictation and that it was not a memory test. But these 'battered fragments' continued to appear. For instance, from the passage:

1 Until a few years ago, people had good reason

> to fear a bite from the deadly funnel-web spider. 2 The spider, which lives along the eastern coast of Australia, is especially aggressive in the summer months. 3 In 1981, after twenty-two years of research, an antivenene was finally developed. 4 Since then, ten victims of the funnel-web have been successfully treated with the antivenene and have fully recovered. 5 Prior to this, they almost surely would have died." (Wajnryb. 1988:44)

the final sentence from one group appeared as: *Prior of the almost surely will die.* The students who wrote this sentence could not explain what it meant, but could and did explain, when asked, that before the use of antivenene people who had been bitten usually died. Why then did they write this sentence?

I wondered whether the passages were simply too difficult for my class. Despite Wajnryb's classification of 'pre-intermediate' or 'intermediate', which seemed appropriate for the level of my class, the passages were very dense, the first of the 'pre-intermediate' ones containing a predicted (by Wajnryb) seven items of vocabulary to focus on in pre-teaching, and several 'content' items in each sentence. Thus students were expected to receive and produce new lexical items correctly in context almost immediately. Perhaps this was the problem.

A more familiar text

I decided to try the students on a dictogloss passage based on a recent excursion. In this passage most of the words would be familiar to the students, as 'new' words had been taught before the excursion, were reinforced during the excursion, and had arisen again when the students were talking and writing about the excursion.

The reconstructed passages this time were generally quite fluent and often contained more content than the original! (Clearly the students were very familiar with material.) There were still many grammatical errors but three out of the four reconstructions were relatively fluent and cohesive, so it seemed that difficult vocabulary might possibly play a part in the problem. One, however, exhibited 'battered fragments':

> Yesterday a lot of students from Language Study Department went to see "Sale of the Century". The program was inside studio at channel 9. **Mr Peter Smith who was the warm up entertained us idea while the audience were waiting on the sat, take many** three camera men, and floor manager who can show everything down stair. **Upstair there were more technicians and director. We watched two programs being filmed.**

Perhaps I was 'doing it wrong'. I discussed the problem with colleagues and they indicated that they had noticed the same phenomenon. They did not, however, see it as a real problem, just one of the usual things that happened in the dictogloss procedure. For me, on the other hand, the battered fragments were an indication of a breakdown in the process; they were getting in the way of any genuine reconstruction of a piece of text and causing students to write less fluent and cohesive sentences than they normally would.

Different teachers

From two other classes (one more advanced and one less advanced than my class) I collected examples of students' reconstructed dictogloss pieces. In each class I found at least one example of sentences of battered fragments and often more. I decided to record the group discussions of a class which had been studying at TAFE for about one term and in this time had done a dictogloss every week with a very experienced teacher who meticulously followed the dictogloss procedure as described by Wajnryb.

The students' understanding of the task

I elicited from the students the procedure and their task. To my question: "Does it have to be the same as the book?", they answered with a resounding "No!" I recorded the discussions, and collected their final pieces and their rough notes. When I asked them what the passage was about, they found it relatively easy to tell me and were able to correctly answer all questions I put to them concerning details.

Three out of the four groups completed passages which contained battered fragments and there was little evidence of overall cohesion. In one case the rough notes contained more fluent and correct sentences than the final piece.

The discussions

In the recorded discussions students were actively engaged in the task and entering into constructive discussion about grammatical features. However, they often seemed to value the evidence of their ears and what they thought they heard above their understanding of the global meaning of the text, and above their own knowledge of sentence and text construction and grammatical forms. They approached the task bottom-up, on a word by word and sentence by sentence level, and once they had assembled all the remembered parts into what seemed to sound like the original, they moved on. At no stage did any group reread a sentence and discuss what it meant and where it fitted in the whole; the only adjustment they made was on small grammatical points and fitting heard words or sounds or phrases into the sentence.

It appeared that as they did not understand the heard text fully, they did not expect to understand the written one. In other words, they virtually wrote off the notion of comprehensibility of the whole text, and then worked within their perceived limited understanding. Almost all of the students in these three classes are of educational backgrounds which place a high value on memory and accuracy. Possibly the students felt that it was better to have as many words that were in the original text than to have a more coherent text which was lexically quite different from the original.

Perhaps, despite their ability to articulate the requirements of the task, they perceived it as essentially a listening task, or dictation, in which case their desire to get every word down as close as possible to the original is understandable. Students almost invariably beg their teachers to read the passage or play the tape again. Teachers who accede to their demands unconsciously exacerbate the students' desire to capture every word.

A different approach

I decided to try to change the students' perceptions of their task by approaching the correction in a slightly different way. At the end of the reconstruction phase I asked students to list the main points on the board. Next we corrected each piece as a whole, going over any grammatical points as they arose and generally perfecting each piece.

I asked the students to decide which was the best and tried to elicit reasons for this. Finally we compared each text with original, concentrating on the main points. I then asked them to look at errors in each original group text and to suggest reasons for the error, emphasizing the battered fragments, the words which made the sentence confusing. Finally the class proposed this rule: "It is better to write a sentence you understand than one you don't."

Contradictions within the procedure

There are some contradictions within the dictogloss procedure itself. The correction stage involves the comparison of the students' final corrected pieces with the original. Students usually exhibit some excitement at this, craning their necks to see which group got it right. Yet the task they have been asked to do is not to memorise and reproduce the original - it has been deliberately structured to prevent this. It seems to me that there is a contradiction between the task the students have been set and a correction process which finally measures their efforts against the original. Inevitably, even students who have constructed a piece which is grammatically sound, textually cohesive and logical, and which contains all the information of the original, regard their efforts as wrong wherever they differ from the original.

Another difficulty arises with the grammatical focus predicted for each passage. The teacher is advised to select passages for a focus on certain chosen structural areas, taking into account language levels. In my experience, almost invariably, the grammatical points which arise from the students' work are rarely the ones chosen for focus. If a teacher concentrates on using the original text as the model, the students' texts can be devalued, and their desire to reproduce the original reaffirmed.

Conclusion

Dictogloss is a very complex and challenging procedure for students. It involves many tasks which are beneficial to the language learning process. Teachers need to be aware of the pitfalls which are often encountered, and take an active role in helping students avoid them and thus derive the greatest benefit from the exercise.

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Promoting classroom discussion

Michael Clutterbuck

A problem confronting language teachers in Australia is the unwillingness of many students to speak freely in class. The traditional approach to teaching in many countries from which our students come has long been that of a strictly enforced, teacher-fronted classroom and curriculum in the Confucian mould, which relied on incorruptible and competent authorities. The students were there to learn - not to question - the information imparted to them by the teachers.

In Western educational practice, the free give and take in class with students asking questions and readily volunteering answers when requested has been common for many years. Students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels are used to this system and respond to it; this is especially true of tertiary level students where discussions in seminars or tutorials is considered to be an essential component of the learning process. This stress on the thinking processes of the student or learner has a long tradition; it was in use in classical Greece under Socrates, and was taken a stage further in medieval university education in Europe when students often followed their teachers from town to town discussing the issues of the subject as they travelled. It has a strong cultural grounding and is hardly questioned among academics.

The problem of reluctance to speak in class is compounded by the large body of evidence to suggest that conversation, in a variety of genres, is very conducive to second language acquisition. How then can we encourage our students to break with what is clearly a deep cultural tradition and adopt an alien habit?

There is one aspect of our overseas students' cultures, namely the strong sense of duty to society, which so many seem to have, which presents an opportunity for exploitation; one might use this feeling to overcome their reluctance to speak by appealing to their ethics. When such an appeal is combined with a division of the class into small groups, then the authoritarian role of the teacher is diminished, and the students may be prepared to speak more readily.

Furthermore, task-based information exchange has, like conversation, a well-researched empirical base for encouraging negotiation among non-native speakers of English. A combination of these two features of second language acquisition with an appeal to their sense of social responsibility suggested a possible solution to the problem in a discussion about basic moral principles, starting with the Ten Commandments.

"Task-based information exchange has, like conversation, a well-researched empirical base for encouraging negotiation among non-native speakers of English."

Some months ago I introduced the topic of the Ten Commandments to an intermediate class to see what they would do with it. The class was one which had a history of unwillingness to participate in large class discussions, but which took to pair and small group work with enthusiasm. They responded well and spent more than half an hour in vigorous active discussion among themselves. I tried to formalise the topic and repeat it under slightly different circumstances to see whether it would again generate discussion and negotiation.

Two lessons were then audio-taped to see how the predicted outcomes were realised in fact. One lesson involved a group of EAP students with a relatively high level of spoken English (ASLPR 3 or better); and the second lesson a few days later was with a class of intermediate level students (ASLPR 2 or 2+).

The first class concerned was a small group of 5 who had not worked together as a class before (this lesson unfortunately clashed with another activity, hence the unplanned small group number), two were from one class and three were from a different one. They were divided into two groups, one pair and one trio, each including students who were unfamiliar to each other. However all had been at least eight weeks in ELICOS classes, and they were aware that in Australia open speaking in the classroom context was normal procedure. The class consisted of a Muslim, a Hindu, a Chinese with a Confucian outlook and two Japanese, neither of whom appeared to be strongly religious. Only one student was female.

The class began by discussing the need for developing the language of negotiation. Functions involved in negotiating were noted: agreeing, disagreeing, suggesting, criticising, explaining with reasons or evidence. This was followed by a brief discussion of the meaning of the term 'moral guidance' and how this was imparted. The concept of the "Ten Commandments" was elicited with some discussion and brief questions were put to compare the concept with similar ideas of moral guidance in the native countries of the students. The 'Five Rules of Good Behaviour' for the Japanese were mentioned, though not detailed, and the '17

Principles' for Hindu men and women (different principles for each, apparently) were also elicited. Two of the Ten Commandments were known or guessed and noted on the board.

After this introduction, the main task was given, the class divided and the discussions began. There were two unforeseen problems; the first one concerned the language of the Ten Commandments. I had simplified the wording and assumed that the students would understand them; this proved not to be the case and there was considerable discussion on the meanings of 'images', 'abuse' and 'honour'. This distracted the students for some time (about 15 minutes) from the actual task of negotiating and producing their own commandments. The second problem concerned the task to be done; although it had been specifically written down on the handout given to all students (Appendix), it became obvious that not all of them fully understood what was required and I had to circulate and give an individual explanation as to what was needed. Once these two problems had been overcome, the class began the actual task

In general their discussions used a number of different negotiating skills. Personal observation showed emphatic and appropriate use of body language from one lively student to make her points, and other students also used it to a lesser degree. There was some use of dictionaries to attempt to clarify a concept in suggesting why a particular viewpoint should be accepted. Questioning techniques were also employed when deciding how a law was to be worded. ("How can we say that parents must teach children?" "How can we tell them about other advanced people in the world?")

One pair was slow to start because one student was shy in speaking and the other was reluctant (or unable?) to produce original ideas. They wanted me to provide them with answers to the task. They completed the task only after I explained what was required and left them to work on their own. There was, however, rather more copying from the original commandments than I had expected.

In the light of this experience, I modified my approach to the second lesson. This was conducted with a class of 10 students of intermediate level. There were 5 males and five females. Four students were Japanese and there were two each from Sri Lanka, Korea and Taiwan. This was a class which had worked together for some eight weeks and the students knew one another. This time I was careful to explain what all the commandments meant before setting the task. I also had one group work aloud to discuss and produce a commandment so that the rest of the class could see what they had to do. The class divided into three groups and two began their discussions with apparent enthusiasm, one group did not interact well and were not able to complete the task in the time allotted.

Predicted outcomes were similar to that of the first class except that there was more group interaction, undoubtedly due to the students' familiarity with each other. Two groups each contained at least one lively speaker and every student made at least one contribution in formulating their groups' laws. Use of dictionaries or electronic translators and appropriate gestures was again noted. There was a variety of negotiating techniques including questions (Do you think a man must have only one woman?"), suggestions ("Shall we be good to friends?") and agreement ("yes, is right."). The use of dictionaries was not always successful, possibly due to the inexperience of the users; for example, healing with "necromancy" was disapproved of'; 'necromancy' was later changed in the final plenary assessment to 'black magic'. There was some interesting but inaccurate guessing; 'aborticide' was to be illegal, later corrected to 'abortion'. A lengthy discussion in one group debated the merits of "humanhood" and "humankind", but finished up (on my advice) with 'human'. The nominated scribe of each group was given plenty of help by the others in formulating the laws, often with advice on spelling or phrasing.

Unexpected outcomes included lengthy (15 seconds) periods of silence when nobody spoke (all were thinking), less imitating of the ten commandments than in the first class, cross-group interaction and, to my considerable surprise, use of grammar to clarify and correct wording ("No, 'kindly' is adverb, write "kind", you need adjective here."). The cross-group group interaction occurred because two close friends had inadvertently separated and found themselves in different groups, but the cross-talk was of value and contributed to both groups' discussions.

> **"Class dynamics are possibly more important than the English levels, extroverted learners are likely to generate more discussion then shy ones, irrespective of the level of communicative competence."**

I had expected continued use of the model form "you shall..." in the students' laws but was surprised not to get it in either class. The advanced class made exclusive use of the formulation "You should..." in both sets of laws. The laws of the intermediate class used simple imperatives with only three exceptions; one 'should' and two plain indicatives. A previous class had, without having discussed the grammatical structure, used the original structures in their laws.
If negotiation as a technique is to be encouraged in ESL work, and I believe it has a valuable role to play, then the results of these experiments would suggest that the topic has merit. Some tentative conclusions

can be drawn: the task must be carefully explained beforehand and the students should be clear as to what they are to do. Secondly, class dynamics are possibly more important than the English levels, extroverted learners are likely to generate more discussion than shy ones, irrespective of the level of communicative competence. It would therefore seem wise to include one extrovert in each group if possible. Thirdly, class size does not seem to be relevant, indeed, a larger class may be more productive than a smaller one, as the students work in small groups and seem keen to hear what rules other groups have decided on.

Pre-teaching structures for setting out laws in this genre-based activity, does not seem warranted; the production of suitable structures occurred without it in all groups, although if specific wording were required, then this would need to be stressed at the beginning. Group work of this nature seems to engender a co-operative attitude among the students because mutual assistance was common and usually (though not always) provided an improvement in the written language. The role of the teacher can be that of an adviser or facilitator for most of the time spent on the activity, needing only to introduce the task at the start and then summarise the findings at the end. Most of the students found the topic entertaining and stimulating, and once they had overcome their initial shyness, seemed to respond well. This is an exercise which I feel I can profitably add to my repertoire.

Appendix: Handout given to all the students

The Ten Commandments

1. You shall not pray to any god but me.
2. You shall not pray to any images.
3. You shall not abuse my name.
4. One day every week you shall keep for me.
5. You shall honour your father and mother.
6. You shall not kill.
7. You shall not have sex outside your marriage.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not lie about others.
10. You shall not desire the possessions of others.

You are a passenger in an aircraft that has crashed in a jungle inhabited by very primitive people. These people have given you and your companions food and shelter, because they believe you are gods sent to help them.
Your group has to discuss and agree to ten rules to help these primitive people in their daily lives. Your rules do not have to be the same as the Christian commandments of course, but they should give some moral guidance.

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From Theory to Successful Practice with Senior Primary E.S.L. Students

Adrienne Herbert

In January 1993, I attended the ACTA/ ATESOL (N.S.W.) Conference and Summer School at the University of Technology in Sydney. Among many informative speakers, two were particularly interesting - Michael Long (a linguist from the University of Hawaii) and Penny Ur (an E.S.L. teacher and author from Haifa University, Israel). Both of these people addressed topics that had occupied my thoughts for some time as a teacher of Primary E.S.L. students; for example, how adequate are the linguistic and communicative outcomes of a natural learning, 'soak it all up by osmosis' approach? Do we still need to pay attention to the way English grammar works? If we do attend to students' grammar, how can we marry this with the communicative-activities approach that gets students talking so efficiently. Grammatical knowledge, learned in structured situations seems rarely to be transferred to more spontaneous ones.

Penny Ur's lecture argued that it is possible to do both communicative and grammar activities, provided there is a gradual progression between the two. She referred to this as 'bridging the gap from accuracy to fluency'- a process which can be achieved by making language tasks more or less structured and directed. At the 'accuracy' end of the bridge are semi-controlled sentences (structured dialogues) and at the 'fluency' end are communicative, problem solving activities.

"Do we still need to pay attention to the way English grammar works?"

Michael Long, in his lecture, put forward the premise that "intervention (negotiation of meaning plus focus on form) works better than incidental learning from simple exposure to comprehensible input" (Long 1993: p.4). He presented evidence that immersion in comprehensible input is insufficient and that there is a need to focus on form . However, Long did not propose that E.S.L. teachers return to the syllabus of linguistic items that was the traditional Grammar-Translation Method- a method that ignored the social purposes of language. He suggested drawing attention to form at significant stages, thus causing the second language learner to notice aspects of form that might be sufficient to speed the process of acquisition.

According to Long and Ur, incidental or natural learning is insufficient as many ESL teachers have suspected. Focusing on form justifiably remains an integral part of second language teaching and learning. Armed with strategies for assisting students to transfer their knowledge of English grammar from structured to communicative contexts, I returned to the coalface!

Early in Term 1, a colleague and I decided that a group of nine Year 5 and 6 E.S.L. students' needs would best be met by being withdrawn to follow a special E.S.L. Program for 45 minutes each day. The first languages of these students were Chinese and Vietnamese, with the exception of an Arabic speaking girl, who had just returned from an extended stay in Lebanon. In outlining the ESL project, I will describe the difficulties experienced by the Chinese and Vietnamese learners of English. Their length of time in Australia varied from six months to just over two years. Withdrawal lessons, after two years, were still considered appropriate for Vietnamese twin girls, who had no formal schooling prior to their placement in Year 4 at Berala P.S.

Although this group of students had been in Australia for some time, their level of English could best be described as early Phase 2 or "becoming familiar with English" - Stage 2 of 4 Stages of English Learning (Hester: 1990). Their progress in English learning had atrophied due to a lack of practice in both social and curriculum contexts - 'an entrenched condition of near-competence in their second language' (Aird and Lippmann 1983: p. 127). There was a great need to give these students fluency practice in 'authentic' situations - or as close to them as a classroom can create. However, these students also had a need for grammar work. Confusion existed over the English tense system and just about every inflection and syntactic word was omitted in both spoken and written modes.

This paper describes an E.S.L. Program of approximately one and a half terms which aimed to bridge the gap between grammatical accuracy and communicative fluency by drawing attention to aspects of form during the second language learning process.

The areas of the students' English grammar that needed attention were easily identified. They were as follows:-

- articles (no articles in Chinese or Vietnamese);
- past tense verb forms (In Chinese and Vietnamese the 'place in time' is considered understood or is otherwise indicated by word markers rather than

verb changes);
- prepositions (operating differently and used less in Chinese and Vietnamese);
- plurality (not marked inflectionally in Chinese or Vietnamese).

(Commonwealth Schools Commission 1986: 7,8,20,21).

With the exception of articles, each of these aspects of English grammar was taught through Penny Ur's suggested sequence of activities :semi-controlled sentences; open-ended sentence completion; cues for short, free responses; cues for extended responses and communicative / problem solving (Ur 1993: ATESOL Conference). When it was necessary to refer to the particular structures, simple grammatical terms were used, for example; verb, past tense form, preposition, plural form etc. Simple explanations for the way the grammar functioned, within the context of the text being studied, were also given to the students. On occasions, the students made comparisons between Chinese or Vietnamese and English. They appeared quite happy to discuss language in more formal terms and to look at the way English works. Overall, the students' responses to the program were excellent.

> **"Simple explanations for the way the grammar functioned, within the context of the text being studied, were also given to the students."**

Students moved from activities focused on accuracy to those focused on fluency. When appropriate, activities were linked to a Science and Technology unit on Dinosaurs which was being studied by the ESL group in tandem with the mainstream Year 6 classes. Some activities were related to literature units which were an integral and successful part of the ESL Program.

Spoken and written cloze exercises were also used to focus attention on specific grammatical structures in any text currently being studied, including factual texts on dinosaurs and excerpts from literature. 'Stick-on' notes were used to cover the appropriate forms and students predicted and 'chimed in' their responses before attempting similar written exercises. Sometimes the reason for the choice of word or word form was discussed, for example; Dinosaurs are no longer living so 'lived' would be the appropriate verb form in 'Dinosaurs ________ millions of years ago'. In fact the long extinct dinosaur provided excellent opportunities for the use of the past tense!

The question that must now be answered is whether this form-focused ESL program resulted in positive outcomes for the students. Anecdotal records were kept and teacher-constructed tests given at regular intervals. Fei, a Year 5 boy and Jason, Year 6 showed significant improvement in their English pronunciation, vocabulary and general fluency. They were confidently using more complex structures in both spoken and written contexts. These positive results were supported by the mainstream teachers who described an increase in active participation by the students in a wider range of curriculum areas. Niem Phuong and Niem San, the Vietnamese twin girls in Year 6, also showed significant progress after their experiences on the program. This included greater participation in group games and partner work, more spontaneous use of English with each other, an increase in the use of standard grammatical forms targeted by the program (spoken and written modes) and the ability to attempt more complex writing tasks. Niem Phuong's class teacher also described a similar pattern of behaviour to Fei and Jason - an increase in active participation in mainstream classroom activities including excellent Dinosaur Project work.

Frequent communicative activities with partners led to all students becoming more spontaneous and confident with their use of English in these situations. A satisfying buzz of English conversation became the norm for partner work. The year 6 ESL students had a Writing Assessment Task in the mainstream classroom at the end of Term 1 and in Week 7 Term 2. All showed evidence of great improvement in written English in comparison with their efforts in Term 1. The students' texts were longer, more cohesive and they attempted to convey more complex ideas through a greater range of sentence structures. Of course, the ESL Program was not the only input towards the students' progress as English writers -a intensive writing program was also operating in the mainstream classes for Years 5 and 6.

The following is an analysis of writing samples for Jack - another Year 6 ESL student who showed considerable progress during the program:-

	4/93 Term 1	**6/93 Term 2**
Text type:	Personal Recount/letter	Personal Description
Ability to handle genre: **Story Structure:**	Reasonable confident Good	Reasonably confident Good. A longer text. Using paragraphing.
Cohesion:	Connectives – repetitive use of 'and'	Making new sentences instead of 'and'
Vocabulary:	Appropriate simple vocabulary	Appropriate simple vocabulary

continued next page

	4/93 Term 1	6/93 Term 2
Sentence	* Confusion of tenses – past/simple present	* Knowledge of past tense forms developing – Use of tenses more consistent Generally fewer omissions
	* Omissions of articles/ pronouns	
	* Word Order 'I like to you came'	Still reversing word order
	* Plural inflection omitted. Using prepositional phrases correctly	Using plural inflection '-s' Using more complex sentence structures
Punctuation:	Some sentence punctuation	Most sentences punctuated correctly
Spelling:	Spelling words as he pronounces them	Improved – mostly standard spelling

(Adapted from Gibbons 1991)

A comparison was also made between the diary stories written by the students in the ESL lesson in February and in June. June's diary stories showed more instances of the appropriate use of forms we had been targeting and generally more complex sentence structures. The spelling has been standardised in the following work samples:-

Yesterday with friend Kon play handball. (Jack. 11.2.93)

On the Sunday my cousins camed to my home and we played some games. (Jack. 23.6.93)

this morning I get up to the bed first watch TV and then my mum make some eating thing. (Fei.9.2.93)

Yesterday I went to the video shop to borrow some video to watch. (Fei. 23.6.93).

The approach that has been outlined, that is, encouraging meaningful communication while continuing to focus on grammatical forms, was very successful with these students. Positive outcomes were observed in the students' English fluency and accuracy as well as in their ability to participate with confidence in mainstream and direct ESL teaching learning situations. The experiences provided were satisfying and productive ones for both the ESL learners and teachers involved.

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For details of the accuracy and fluency activities discussed in the article, contact the author.

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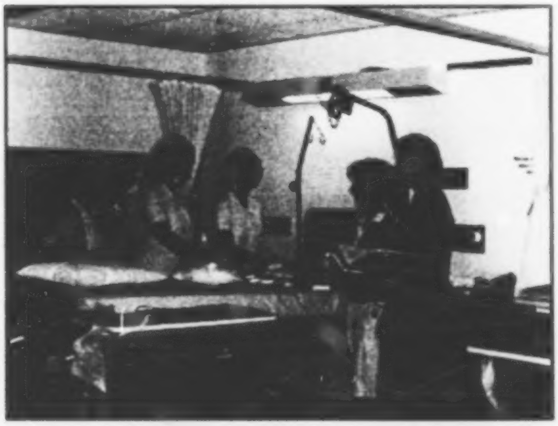

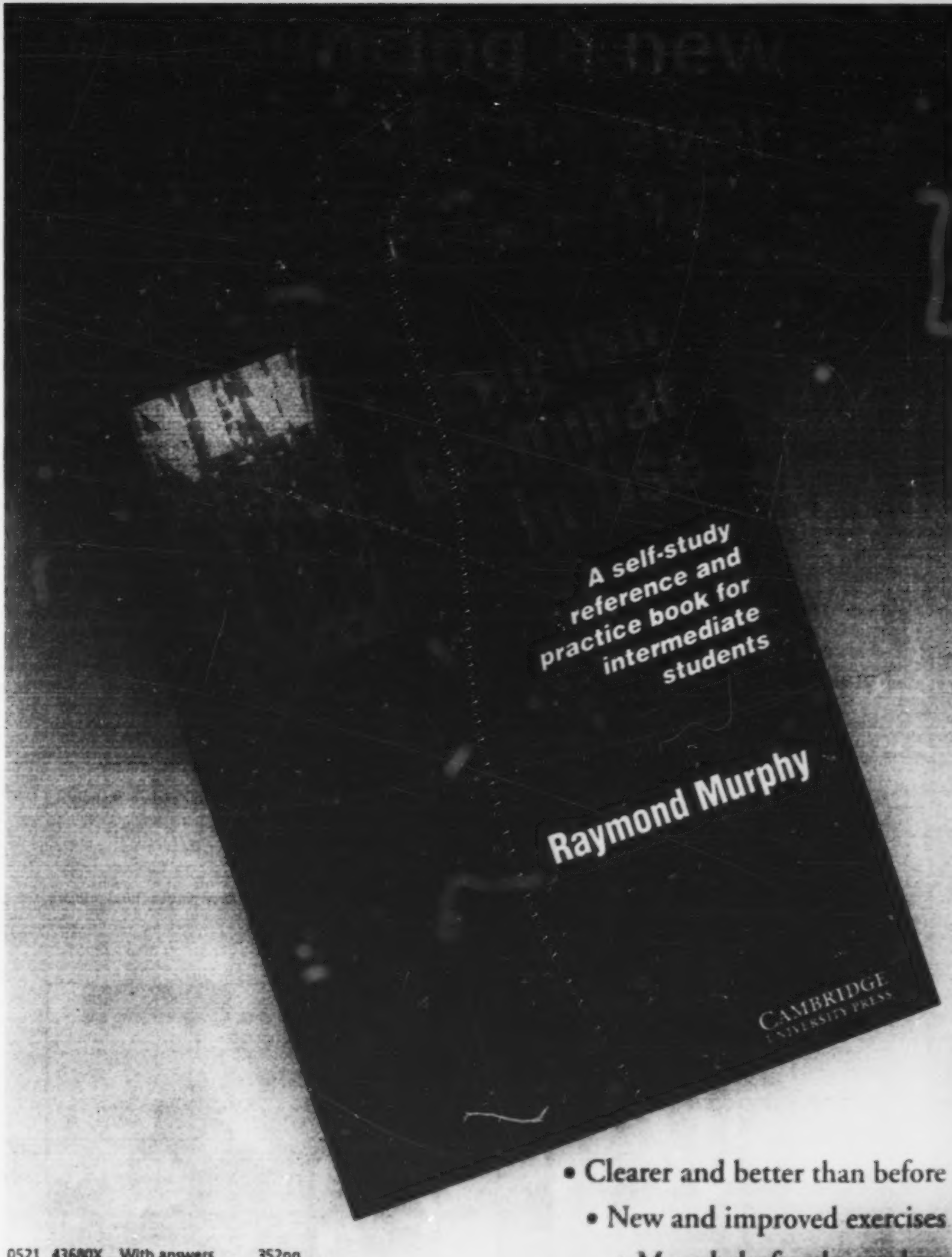
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Classroom-based research: elicitation techniques and question types

Teresa Devine

Introduction

Elicitation and questioning are integral parts of not only ESL classrooms, but all language classrooms and a substantial proportion of classroom time is spent on eliciting students' talk. Nunan (1989:195) describes elicitation as a common feature of classroom teacher questions. For this research I would like to separate the techniques or cues used by teachers to orchestrate student talk and establish turns from the questions used to promote student talk on a particular topic.

The 'mechanics' of elicitation can be examined from a variety of viewpoints. Van Lier (1988:105) points out that in multi-party settings (e.g. a language classroom) some form of allocation of turns is set up to deal with problems of transition from one turn to another as well as the distribution of turns. In the classroom this work of specifying a speaker for the next turn is most carried out by the teacher (van Lier 1988:107). The allocationg of turns can be classified into

i) nominating (verbally selecting a next speaker by name etc.);
ii) signalling (eg pointing with finger);
iii) eye gaze.

Soliciting is the work of specifying the content of the next turn, without designating a speaker. This can take the form of requesting a verbal action (eg to answer a question) or a bid for a turn (eg Hands up if you can tell me ....) (van Lier 1988:110).

The form of teacher questions has also been the focus of several recent studies. A common distinction is drawn between display and referential questions. A display question is used for the purpose of getting students to display their knowledge of either linguistic forms or content. A subset of this is "known information questions" where the teacher already knows the answer (Allwright & Bailey 1991:140).In contrast, referential question (true- or genuine-information questions) are those where actual information is sought by the questioner (Allwright & Bailey 1991:140)

Long and Sato (1983, cited in Nunan 1989:29) used this distinction in their study. They found that L2 teachers used many more display than referential questions, in contrast to out-of-class interactions between native and non-native speakers. Outside the classroom, pratically all the questions to learners were referential, whereas in the classroom, the opposite was found.

Van Lier questions this distiction between referential and display questions and asks why teachers, who are convinced of the benefits of meaningful interaction, engage in questioning which is so different from ordinary discourse. He suggest that the questions are not given their L2 classroom character by their virtue of being referential or display questions, but rather that they are aimed at eliciting language from the learners (van Lier 1988:22). This is a valid point, but Nunan points out that research into the relative effects of display and referential questions is in its early stages. It may be that the effort involved in answering referential questions is greater than display questions. This may prompt deeper processing on the part of the learner and so be a greater stimulus to aquisition (Nunan 1989:30).

It can be seen, therefore, that further research is required in this area, however the effects of a discrete feature such as question types should not be viewed in isolation from all the other factors that have an effect on language acquisition.

The study

In my research I aimed to explore these areas:

> What type of elicitation cues (eg nominating, signalling, etc.) do I use during teacher-fronted sessions in my classroom to direct student talk?
>
> How frequently do I use them and does this frequency vary according to the stage of the lesson?
>
> When using questions to elicit verbal language, how frequently do I use display and referential questions and does this vary according to the stage of the lesson?
>
> Does using more referential, as opposed to display questions, make any difference to the length of student responses?

By 'stage of a lesson' I mean a somewhat discrete component of a lesson, or series of lessons. For the purposes of this study the following stages are considered. The first is the lead-in or preparation, where the context is set, and revision of earlier work is carried out, etc. The next is elicitation or production, where the teacher aims to find out if the students can produce the target language. If the students are not able to generate the language, then presentation or explanation may follow. If they are able to produce this language then a stage of free practice and extension may vary greatly. It does, for the purposes of this study, provide a basis for comparison of the range of elicitation techniques and question types used at different stages of a lesson.

The class

My class consisted of 27 Year 6 students from a wide range of backgrounds and English language experiences. Of these, 20 were considered to be from LOTE backgrounds including four recently arrived students from the People's Republic of China who have all been in Australia less than two years. The data I collected was from three lessons taken with a small group of 5-6 students which included at least three of the recently arrived students. All the students in this class were accustomed to being grouped in a variety of ways (eg.interest based, needs based etc.) and working in different groups.

Data collection

I began collecting data by videotaping one of my lessons with the whole class with the aim of collecting information to examine teacher talk and whether or not I modify my language to a foreigner language when I speak to the four recent arrivals in the class. After viewing this video, I found that I had not gathered much data that could be analysed in the way I was hoping to. This was due to these factors:

i) in a whole-class situation I found that the number of teacher-student interactions between particular students was not high, but rather spread over a number of students.

ii) because of the size of the class the sound recording was not of a high quality.

To overcome these problems I would have had to record many lessons to gather enough data to analyse as well as use many recording units (either video or audio) around the classroom. Because this seemed an immense task, I decided to look for other patterns in my teaching.

The first lesson, which I did not include in the data analysis,was useful in that it began to give me insights into the way in which I elicit language from the students. I decided then to use a smaller group (5-6 students) which included at least some of the new arrivals as well as other members of the class, while a support teacher taught the rest of the class.

By this stage the video camera had been in both my classroom and the other room that is often used for group work, for about a week and was no longer a distraction to the students. I did not tell the students when the video was running, but started it running in the breaks before any lesson I taped. I also used an audio tape as insurance against bad sound quality from the video and had this recording from when the students entered the class.

I taped three lessons and transcribed the teacher-fronted stage of these lessons to analyse because the research was teacher-focused. The first two lessons were on two consecutive days while the third occurred in the following week, after I had viewed the first two lessons and begun to form questions that I wished to investigate.

The research had thus become a type of pattern analysis. As pointed out by Nunan, the most constructive application of PA is to gain feedback on what happens in a classroom that is otherwise not available to teachers. He also notes that it is most useful for teachers who have already identified specific aspects of their teaching practice that they wish to examine, which I had done (Nunan 1989:93).

Because of the patterns I saw emerging and the background reading I had done, I decided to expand the analysis to that of questioning techniques. I wanted to explore the differences between display and referential questions and so taped a lesson (the third) in which I aimed to use more referential questions.

Data analysis

The first lesson was aimed at reviewing vocabulary introduced in a previous lesson. This fits neatly into the stage of lead-in or preparation described above, but when it was obvious the students could not generate the structures independently, it became more of a presentation stage. The third lesson focused on a stage involving freer practice as well as some extension.

The three transcripts were analysed in three steps. The first involved an analysis of the techniques used to control turns when eliciting verbal language. The second analysis was a count of the number of display and referential questions asked in each lesson. Finally, the lengths of responses to the display and referential questions were counted to investigate the influence of these questions on the length of responses given to them.

Techniques to control turns when eliciting language

Van Lier's taxonomy of the actions carried out by the teacher when directing turn taking was used for this part of the analysis (van Lier 1988:109-110). The following extracts from the transcripts give examples of each of van Lier's categories.

Allocation of turns

Nominating:

T: Good Thuong. John, what would you put in?

Jn: Um... I'd put in some evergreen tree because my dad would like it so the leaves don't make a mess.

Signalling:

T: OK. Any other words? (I pointed at Hua, who once again had his hand up)

H: Mm.....flower bed.

Eye gaze:

T: Right. You can put in a fish pond. (I wrote the word on the b'b and then turned from the b'b and looked at Candy, who had her hand up)

C: A swimming pool.

These classifications, however, seemed insufficient as they did not cover the control of turns observed on the video when a question was asked by the teacher as a reaction to the student's response. Many instances were observed where a turn was allocated, not by any of the above actions, but because the teacher's question was directly related to what had been said in the preceding student turn. Even though eye gaze may have been present in many instances, it was not this feature that allocated the turn, but the content of the question. I named this follow-on allocation and an example of this is shown below.

Follow -on allocation

T: Mm... (I looked at John's diagram) You've got a barbecue, John?

JN: Yes...I like barbecue food.

T: Why is it so far from the house?

JN: So that when you're cooking*...the smell ...doesn't go into the house.

A subset of follow-on allocation was a modification of a category in the research carried out by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975: 44). Sinclair and Coulthard named this a 'loop' and defined its function as returning the discourse to the stage it was before the pupil spoke. Brock (1986:50) named similar actions as confirmation checks and clarifications requests. Once again, a turn is not allocated, but understood by the addresser and the addressee. For example:

Th: Yes. And there a... (unintelligible) for my brother to play.

T: A what, sorry?

Th. A cubby how.

T. A cubby house.

General solicit

This is also a category from van Lier's taxonomy , but represents the lack of allocation of a turn. This occurs when the content of the next turn is given, but a speaker is not nominated.

T: On a plan or map, which direction is up on a page....usually?

H. C & R: North

The three transcripts were analysed according to these six categories of actions and the results are represented in Table 1 below.

	Teacher's Action	Tscript 1	Tscript 2	Tscript 3
Allocating turns	Nominating	25	18	20
	Signalling	5	5	5
	Eye Gaze*	4	2	4
	Follow-on allocation	12	11	32
	Clarification/ check	0	0	4
General solicit		18	12	7

Table 1 Frequency of techniques used to elicit verbal language

* Signifies a solicit carried out by eye gaze only. Many instances of eye gaze combined with other actions were recorded throughout all three transcripts.

Frequency of questions used

The transcripts were analysed a second time according to the types of questions asked by the teacher to elicit verbal language. The two types of questions were those described in the studies cited in the introduction to this paper: display and referential questions. Sample questions from the transcripts are given below.

DISPLAY QUESTION: (aimed at getting students to display their knowledge)

T: What's a bungalow?
Jn: Like a little room or house in the backyard.

REFERENTIAL QUESTION: (seeking actual information)

T: Why are you putting them there, near the window?
H: Mm...because ...someone look and see ...um ...feel it's...very clean.

Included in this category of referential questions are directions that are used to seek information, but are not in the form of a question. For example,

T: (to Candy) Tell me what's in your picture.
C: That's a house and evergreen tree, a fish pond. That's a flower bed. That's tables and chairs and that's a swimming pool.

The results of this analysis are recorded in Table 2

Type question	T'script 1	T'script 2	T'script 3	Total
Display	28	38	8	74
Referential	5	1	47	53
Total	33	39	55	127

Table 2 Types of questions used

Length of responses to display and referential questions

The transcripts were analysed a third time to determine the length of responses given by students. The length is described in number of words and was calculated by dividing the total number of words given to all the display questions in a transcript by the number of display questions asked. The same was calculated for referential questions.The same procedure was then carried out on the transcripts as a whole.The results of this third analysis are given in Table 3 below.

Average length of response (no. of words)	T'script 1	T'script 2	T'script 3	Overall
Display qn	3.3	4.4	2.3	3.7
Referential qn	5.2	1.0*	7.5	7.2

Table 3 Length of responses (number of words)

* In Transcript 2, only one referential question was used

Discussion

Many interesting features of my methods of eliciting verbal language from students in my class have been highlighted in this study. Looking first at the mechanics of elicitation (Table 1), we can see that the allocation of turns via nominating, signalling and eye gaze does not vary greatly across the three lessons. The most startling difference is in the use of follow-on allocation. This was used a substantially greater number of times in the third lesson as compared to the first two. Also there is an increase in the number of clarification requests and comprehension checks in the third transcript, as well as the decrease in the use of general solicits.

Although there are many factors influencing the difference noted above, they are all interrelated. The third lesson was taught with the aim of increasing the number of referential questions I asked (but incorporating language aims for the students). I managed to increase it from 5 and 1 in the first two transcripts to 47 in the third. (See Table 2). There was also a substantial decrease in the number of display questions asked. When planning a lesson in which to bring about this change in questioning, I instinctively chose a lesson which would have a practice stage. I knew that this would be the stage most suited to open, referential questions.

When I observed the video of this first lesson,I noted other features that were different between it and the other two. The most obvious was my position in the classroom. In the first two lessons I placed myself at the blackboard for most of the lesson. In the third lesson, however, I was seated at the table with the students and able to turn to face them when speaking to them. This implied more intimacy and decreased the power distance between the students and myself. I was also engaged in more one-to-one discussions.

Without timing the lessons carefully, I feel that the wait time after my questions was longer in the third lesson than the other two. I was asking more open questions and probably gave the students more time to formulate their answers. For much of the lesson, while I was talking to one student, the others were working on their tasks. Therefore I did not feel the pressure to keep the lesson moving because the whole group was not waiting for each response. In this way, I was able to comfortably wait a little longer for student responses.

These factors had an influence on the general character of the lessons. Sitting with the students, engaging in more dyadic discussions and waiting longer for their responses brought a more natural and relaxed feel to the class. This is reflected in the significant number of follow-on allocations and clarification requests that I made. These would seem to be part of a more natural conversation where real meaning was being communicated.

When we examine the results of the third analysis (Table 3), we can see a very significant difference in the length of response given to display and referential questions. Overall, the length of responses to referential questions is almost double that of responses to display questions. It is interesting that this difference is much greater in transcript 3 than transcript 2. Once again I feel that this could be due to the factors discussed above.

In her workshop in February, reported in the VATME newsletter (March, 1993: 11), Penny Ur used accuracy to refer mainly to grammatical correctness (but also including pronunciation and vocabulary). On the other hand, fluency exercises focus on the communicative purpose of language. Both have their place in the ESL classroom.

In the lessons which I taped the emphasis can be clearly identified. The first two lessons focus on accuracy; the first on accuracy of lexis and pronunciation, the second on structure and grammar. For example, from the first transcript the emphasis on the exact meaning of a word is evident:

T: Good. What's a shrub, Teresa?
Te: A plant.
T: Just a plant? Is it a big tree?
Te: It's like a small one.

Also evident is the focus on word stress:

T: OK, let's check these words.
Where's the strong sound?
Jn: du
T: decidu'ous?
Jn: Du'ous
R: cid
T: Say it for me Rosie.
R: decid'uous

From the second transcript we can see the emphasis on grammatical form:

R: There is a TV west from the cupboards....
T: West from?
R: West of the cupboards... There is a TV west of the cupboards.

The third lesson was aimed at free practice and the focus was therefore fluency:

T: You've got a barbecue. John?
Jn: Yes, I like barbecue food.
T: Why is it so far from the house?
Jn: So that when you're cooking.... the mell.... the smell doesn't go into the house.
T: Good idea. And a garden setting.
Jn: Near the barbecue so you can eat there. There's a path to the barbecue too.

Because of the different focus of each lesson, the features such as question type, interaction type (dyadic or teacher-whole class), wait time and the perceived power distance between the teacher and student also varied to a great degree. I believe all of these factors influenced the results observed, particularly the length of responses. The following chart summarises these findings:

FLUENCY Focus on communication	True information sought clarification requests and comprehension checks Teacher-student distance smaller Dyadic interactions	More follow-on allocation Closer approx. to natural discourse Teacher-student distance smaller	Longer responses
ACCURACY Focus on correctness	Known information sought Teacher as source of knowledge Teacher-whole class	Less follow-on allocation, etc. Teacher-student distance greater Shorter wait time	Shorter responses

This chart is by no means a comprehensive or conclusive summary of the discussion regarding fluency vs. accuracy, nor of the depth of research into display vs. referential questions. It is only an attempt to present in a clear form the factors that I have been able to draw out of the study I conducted and their inter-relatedness.

Conclusion

Looking back to my original question I can see that the area of question types and responses yielded a great deal more information and discussion than did the question regarding elicitation techniques. This is interesting in itself and was probably predictable because I was able to find a far greater amount of research and literature about question types and their effects than elicitation techniques.

From the analysis of the data regarding the mechanics of elicitation I have seen that I tended to use mostly the same techniques to allocate turns at the same frequency, regardless of the lesson stage. I also use a great deal of allocation of turns, rather than general soliciting. This reflects a great deal of teacher control in these interactions.

The most significant variation in the frequency of techniques used was in my use of follow-on allocation. This was for me, the most interesting

feature of the first analysis. I had not predicted this feature at all; it seemed to emerge from the transcripts. It also seemed to be a link between the two foci of this study because it was such a significant feature of the third transcript.

In the area of questioning techniques, I have become very aware of the extent to which I use display questions and the role they play in an ESL classroom. It would seem from this small study that the use of referential questions does promote longer responses from the students. Using referential questions, however, is not the only factor influencing the length of responses. Other factors that I could observe from my recordings were the interaction type (i.e. dyadic vs. teacher-group), the position I took in the classroom and my general body language and wait time.

The way these factors vary and interplay seems to depend upon the focus of the lesson (or stage of lesson): whether the emphasis is on fluency or accuracy. There is a place for both in the language classroom, and so there is a place for the use of both display and referential questions.

As Nunan (1989:31) points out, the danger is in attempting to isolate certain linguistic features (e.g. question types) from the educational and interactional contexts in which they occur. This research has allowed me to reflect on some of my classroom practices and to view them, not in isolation, but in relation to each other. I have found it impossible to isolate one feature and analyse its effects on the language use of my students. Instead, I have gained a wider perspective of the inter relatedness of some of the factors at play in the classroom.

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GETTING GOING WITH GENRES : THE CURRICULUM NEEDS OF ABORIGINAL LEARNERS

Pam Norman

Introduction

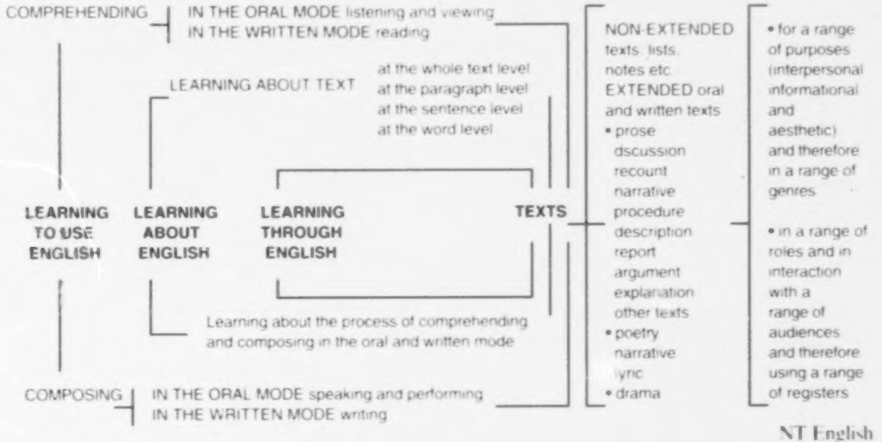
During the past two years a team of teachers within the Aboriginal Schools Curriculum Materials Project (ASCMP) in the Northern Territory Department of Education has been developing English language learning materials for use with Aboriginal students. One set of materials that resulted is known as *Getting Going with Genres* and consists of nine teachers books, eight posters and seven readers covering curriculum genres of recount, narrative, procedure, description, report, argument, discussion and explanation.

The materials reflect teachers' insights into the curriculum needs of Aboriginal learners. 'Curriculum' is interpreted as meaning all the learning activities that are planned to achieve educational outcomes. The author would like to share a description of one of the fifty units of work that resulted from school-based curriculum materials writing workshops held in Aboriginal communities in rural areas of the Northern Territory. The involvement of practising teachers and large numbers of Aboriginal people was considered critical in achieving content validity of curriculum documents.

The field of English

The following diagram reflects significant aspects of the Northern Territory English curriculum. It describes the field of English as learning to use, learning about and learning through English texts that are composed for a range of purposes and therefore in a range of genres. Text includes a communication that may be spoken, written, graphic or body language. Genre refers to how any language text - spoken or written - is shaped by and derives from a particular culture and its social institutions.

THE FIELD OF ENGLISH


COMPREHENDING
IN THE ORAL MODE listening and viewing
IN THE WRITTEN MODE reading
LEARNING ABOUT TEXT
at the whole text level
at the paragraph level
at the sentence level
at the word level
LEARNING TO USE ENGLISH
LEARNING ABOUT ENGLISH
LEARNING THROUGH ENGLISH
TEXTS
Learning about the process of comprehending and composing in the oral and written mode
COMPOSING
IN THE ORAL MODE speaking and performing
IN THE WRITTEN MODE writing
NON-EXTENDED texts: lists, notes etc
EXTENDED oral and written texts
• prose
discussion
recount
narrative
procedure
description
report
argument
explanation
other texts
• poetry
narrative
lyric
• drama
• for a range of purposes (interpersonal informational and aesthetic) and therefore in a range of genres
• in a range of roles and in interaction with a range of audiences and therefore using a range of registers

NT English
curriculum 1992, 2:1

In the *Getting Going with Genres* set, the illustrative texts for description include the Aboriginal flag, boomerangs, spears, witchetty grubs, mulga trees, Warlpiri, Tiwi and Kunwinjku people, communities like Nguiu, Gunbalanya and Yuendumu, bark baskets, coolamons, bicycles, wedge tail eagles and humpies. They serve as models to describe other flags, weapons, food, plants, people, places, household equipment, transport, birds and housing from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures. Following is a unit of work for describing particular flags which exemplifies how learning needs of Aboriginal learners are addressed. It was developed by the team during the writing workshops held in Aboriginal communities.

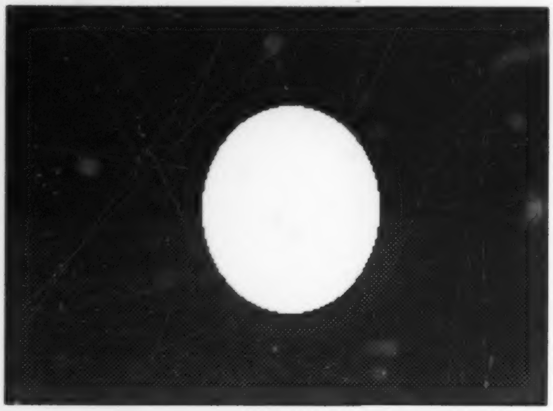
Unit of work for describing particular flags

Learning outcome

Students will

- learn to use English to compose descriptions about particular flags
- learn about description genre
- through English descriptions, learn about flags.

Input



Shared experience

Together, students and teachers have a shared experience in which a description will naturally occur, for example, looking at an Aboriginal flag, touching it, discussing situations where people have seen it used, and describing its design and what the design represents. Further information to find out when the flag was designed and who designed it can be obtained by shared reading and asking questions.

Oral text construction

The teacher orally constructs a description of the Aboriginal flag with sentence complexity appropriate to students' learning levels. Teach sentence structures. Have students imitate, repeat and practise.

> *The Aboriginal flag is a piece of cloth with a design on it. The flag is a symbol to represent Australian Aboriginal people.*
>
> *The flag is rectangular in shape. It is divided horizontally. The upper half is black. The lower half is red. In the centre is a yellow circle.*
>
> *The black stands for the Aboriginal people. The red stands for the land. The yellow stands for the sun.*
>
> *The Aboriginal flag was designed in 1971 by Harold Thomas, an Aborigine from Central Australia.*

Teach vocabulary

Teach the pronunciation, meanings and spelling of words and phrases that students might find useful at a later time. Display on a retrieval chart.

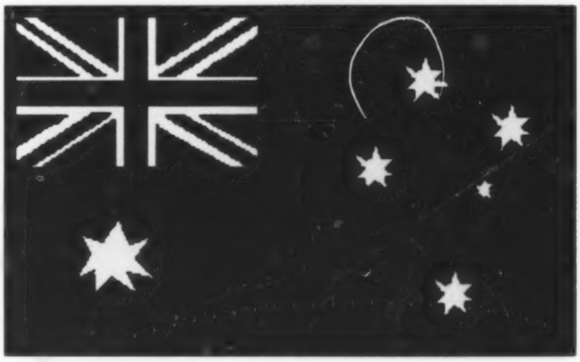
Retrieve means to find and get back. A retrieval chart is useful to help sort, organise and retrieve information. Working out the headings is, in itself, a valuable learning time.

What flag is it?	Aboriginal	Northern Territory	Australian
Define.			
What does it look like?			
What do the featurs represent?			
Who designed it? When was it designed?			
When is it used?			

Explore

Deconstruct a model description

Show and read a description about another flag. Deconstruct the text and identify the text's purpose, structure and typical language features.



The Australian flag is a piece of cloth with a design used as a symbol to represent Australian people.

It is rectangular in shape with a design of stars and the Union Jack. The flag is red, white and blue. In the upper left corner is the Union Jack, the British national flag. Below the Union Jack is a large seven pointed white star known as the Commonwealth star. To the right are the five stars of the Southern Cross.

The Union Jack represents Australia's historic links with Britain. The seven points of the Commonwealth star represent the six states of Australia and the Northern Territory. The Southern Cross is a major feature of the Australian night sky.

The Australian flag has been used to represent Australia since 1909 .

Deconstruction of the text shows

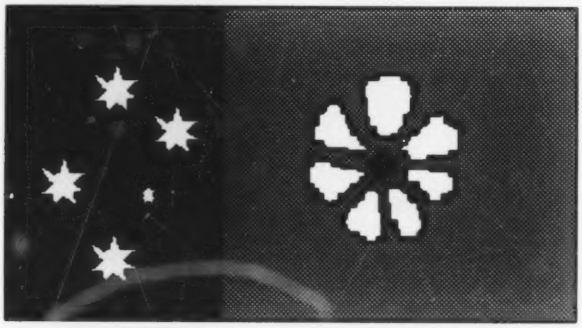
- the purpose of the text is to give a description of the Australian flag;
- the structure of the text is a definition followed by a description in some kind of logical order, in this case, according to what the flag looks like, what the design represents and how long it has been in use;
- the typical language features of the text is the use of present tense and the use of paragraph headings which are not stated in this example but are implied or understood to be there.

Reconstruct a model description

Cut the model text into its parts: definition, description of appearance, what the design represents and how long it has been in use. Jumble and reassemble in order to make a description that has a logical order. Further reconstruction activities could be done at paragraph and sentence levels.

Teacher models writing a description

With students watching carefully, the teacher talks about each step as he or she models how to write a description of another particular flag.



The Northern Territory flag is a piece of cloth with a design used as a symbol to represent the people of the Northern Territory.

It is rectangular in shape and is divided vertically. The smaller left side is black with the stars of the Southern Cross in white. The right side is a red ochre colour with the Sturt's Desert Rose. Its petals are white and it has a black centre. Black, red ochre and white are strong Territory colours.

Sturt's Desert Rose is the floral emblem of the Northern Territory. Its seven petals with its seven pointed centre represent the six Australian States and the Northern Territory.

It was designed by an Australian artist, Robert Ingpen .

Joint negotiation of a description

Here the teacher and students jointly negotiate the writing of a text about a particular flag. It could be a written description of the Aboriginal flag from their shared experience.

The joint negotiation process includes

- the teacher and students discussing and coming to an agreement about what is to be written
- teacher writing so all students can see.

Note: In the preceding activities, learners are given oral and written models, build up vocabulary about the topic, and become aware of the purpose, structure and typical language features of descriptions.

Reshape

Independent efforts

Each student chooses a flag to describe. The flags could be their own designs for a new Australian flag or the result of research about flags of other countries. The description may be oral only, or oral and written. Writing may be a process of draft, conference, redraft, edit and publish. Words needed for this activity might need to be taught and displayed. Models of other description texts about flags should be on display.

Present

Students present their work to others. This work may be used for assessment.

Reflect

Students evaluate their learning.

What have we learned about using English to write a description?

Through descriptions what have we learned about flags?

What use is this learning to us?

This unit of work can serve as an illustrative text to identify principles involved in developing ESL/EFL learning materials to address the curriculum needs of Aboriginal learners.

Curriculum needs of Aboriginal students

Aboriginal people must be involved in educational decision making about activities planned for Aboriginal children. They are the best judges of what is relevant and appropriate. Illustrative texts should reflect the socio-cultural contexts of students. Where possible topics of value in Aboriginal contexts should be used in preference to topics from non-Aboriginal contexts, i.e. work from the known to the unknown. Subject matter should be relevant and of value in transferring classroom learning to real-life situations. A comment of 'No more Humpty Dumpty' by an Aboriginal teacher implies the need for factual texts of value in real life situations.

As an issue of equity and social justice, activities

should focus on achieving language learning outcomes as stated in 'mainstream' curriculum. Aboriginal people have made it known that they do not want curriculum objectives that are watered down or different.

Aboriginal students need a curriculum that incorporates preferred learning styles where this is possible. Research by Stephen Harris in 1975-1976 identified five learning processes that are 'all real and used heavily by Aboriginal people' (Harris, 1992:3). These five major Aboriginal learning processes are

- learning by observation and imitation rather than by verbal instruction;
- learning by personal trial and error rather than by verbal instruction with demonstration;
- learning in real life, rather than by practice in artificial settings;
- learning context-specific skills, versus generalisable principles;
- person-orientation in learning, not information-orientation.

A shared experience is necessary to produce a meaningful context from which abstract or new understandings can evolve. A shared experience gives students a personal orientation to a specific context from which a particular type of language learning can occur. This may capture students' interest and lead to improved learning. In Aboriginal contexts excursions are most common and procedures can arise from watching how an artisan makes something, narratives from listening to an oral story telling, descriptions from describing landforms or wild life, explanations from the subjects of dot paintings and recounts from retelling the experience of the excursion. Shared book, guest speakers, television or video programs, games, using equipment such as a telephone and cooking activities are other experiences which can be used to focus students' attention on the concept, skill or issue to be explored.

A particular type of text must be heard before it can be used. Aboriginal students cannot produce a meaningful stretch of language unless they have first heard it. Students can engage with oral language without being distracted by written symbols and this strategy requires students to practise a skill which is close to what they need for language outside the classroom. Oral work precedes written work and ESL/EFL strategies of drilling, modelling, imitation, repetition, practice, chorus work, pair-work, drama, role play, use of props, innovation, substitution, contextualised dialogue and relating content to world of the child's experiences are all applicable.

New vocabulary needs to be taught before expecting it to be used. Pronunciation, intonation and speech activities are important, particularly because of the hearing problems of many Aboriginal students. Errors are regarded as measures of proficiency and a natural part of language development.

A text needs to be seen as a meaningful whole - the big-picture -before it can be analysed into its constituent parts. This facilitates Aboriginal students deriving meaning from the context in which a text is presented. Just as natural elements have meaning within an Aboriginal world view, lexical and grammatical elements of texts have meaning in the context of culture and situation in which they occur. Deconstruction of a model text precedes reconstruction.

Low-risk activities precede activities involving higher levels of risk. In this way teachers build up students' confidence and are less likely to leave students confused or discouraged. Scaffolding includes the teacher modelling how to compose a text before joint negotiation of a text and independent efforts by students.

Activities need to be cognitively challenging yet scaffolded in such a way that students are not set up for failure. Activities should have a logical organisation culminating in independent efforts by students. The logic required is that of people to whom English is a first language. Part of the learning experience for students is learning how Western school cultures operate and learning to think as speakers of English as a first language think.

An overseas educator experiencing Aboriginal education said she had never seen a group of students so 'under-whelmed' by their schooling, a comment which reflects the low expectations so often held by teachers of Aboriginal students. There needs to be an expectation that Aboriginal students will do independent activities and an assumption that students have the ability to compose the necessary sentence structures. This enables teachers to assess the abilities of students, gives students both an opportunity to use what they already know and a feeling of being recognised for having known it, and gives students a greater feeling of involvement in the learning process. Written composition may be a process of drafting, conferencing, re-drafting, editing and publication. Independent activities by students can be oral only, or oral and written. Tasks should be flexible enough to allow choice and creativity by individual students.

Students should be given the opportunity to present their work to others to show what they can do and receive encouragement, praise and constructive feedback.

Reflection by students is a significant stage as it enables students to evaluate what they have done. Motivation to attend school more regularly or to do further education may increase if students explore the value of curriculum activities.

Conclusion

Developing *Getting Going with Genres* was a unique opportunity for Aboriginal teachers to write the illustrative texts that they considered were relevant and appropriate for the bicultural contexts of students. Aboriginal parents have asked for two-way education for their children and it is important that Aboriginal culture and values are reinforced and not compromised in the process of learning English. The books in the *Getting Going with Genres* set reflect teacher understanding of the curriculum needs of Aboriginal learners. An evaluation study of the effectiveness of the materials will be conducted after their introduction and use in Aboriginal schools in the Northern Territory. Further information on the project is available from the Aboriginal Schools Curriculum Materials Project, Curriculum and Assessment Division, Northern Territory Department of Education, GPO Box 4821, Darwin, NT 0802.

***Pam Norman** was the Senior Education Officer with the Aboriginal Schools Curriculum Materials Project team which helped develop 'Getting Going with Genres'. She has many years experience in curriculum development activities with Aboriginal people, Papua New Guineans, Solomon Islanders and Western Samoans.*

TESOL Troubleshooter

Dear TESOL Troubleshooter,

I will have access to the personal computers at my school for my ESL class next year. I am computer literate but don't know much about CALL programs or ways of integrating them into my teaching. How can I go about finding out about it?

Hope to be enthusiast, Queensland.

Dear enthusiast,

One way to start is with your professional association. A lot of ideas about the use of computers in language learning are passed on informally, and your TESOL association will be able to put you in touch with other CALL practitioners and with local CALL interest groups. There are CALL Education groups in each state that you could contact through your professional association as well.

You could also have a look at the commercial CALL programs and their support materials which will be on display in your local TESOL bookshop.

There are a number of CALL journals which may be available in your TESOL library. Calico and Muesli News are popular ones, but there are a number of others, including *On-CALL* (Australian), and *System*.

Let *TESOL in Context* know how you get on!

TESOL Talk

The process of change in education

Jenny Barnett interviews Youle Bottomley and Jeanette Dalton about the process of change in education.

Youle and Jeanette were the two project officers funded by the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research (NCELTR) in 1993 to document the planning, implementation and evaluation of the introduction of a competency-based curriculum, the Certificate in Spoken and Written English, into a proficiency oriented setting in AMES Victoria. The research project had two related goals: documenting the approach used to introduce the new curriculum, and documenting the changes as experienced by a group of teachers working through the implementation

JB *We are going to focus on the process of change rather than on competency based teaching, is that right?*

YB/JD Yes.

JB *What really interests me is what was the starting point for the project? What were the issues?*

YB It was a major curriculum change. The organisation had had experience of implementing curriculum change in the past, and the strategies used then had been successful. It was felt that it would be worthwhile to document a similar approach and see the process the teachers went through as the change occurred.

JD I think in the 40 years of AMES Victoria's existence this would be the major curriculum change that has taken place.

JB *Did you anticipate difficulties for teachers in this change process?*

JD We're surprised it has gone as smoothly as it has.

YB I suppose one of the main things was actually informing people of what the change was about. Support structures were put in place to facilitate that, and the strategies we used enabled us to react to problems as they came up.

JB *Had either of you previously implemented a competency-based approach before this project?*

YB JD No.

YB That actually was in our favour as it gave us credibility. We were involved in doing what everyone else was doing at the grassroots, as we taught three days a week and worked on the project two days a week. And it made us more understanding of the kinds of concerns teachers were having, and the process of questioning and self-doubt they were going through.

JB *In what way were you a resource for the teachers?*

JD Each week we put out a Bulletin Board on E-mail that answered the questions put to us during the course of the week.

YB We also had regular meetings with curriculum development people within the organisation who provided support to us. And the support of our colleagues in our teaching centres was invaluable.

JD Right across the service there were people who contributed, who shared ideas and strategies.

JB *So it was very collaborative?*

YB/JD Very much so.

JB *OK, let's move to the documentation process itself. Had either of you done this kind of research before?*

JD We were both relatively green.

JB *Have you gained skills through this process?*

YB Yes, especially in this approach which is pretty much an ethnographic approach. We've looked at how one interviews, the kinds of things you have to look for when interviewing over a long period of time, and basic things such as transcribing. And the writing up now is a real learning process.

JB *Would you recommend this as a form of professional development?*

JD Certainly, and we have mirrored the change process in what we have done and learned.

YB It's been professional development and personal growth.

JB *You said the research was ethnographic. What sort of questions were you asking?*

JD We initially looked at Fullan (Fullan, M.G. and S. Stiegbauer 1991 *The New Meaning of*

Educational Change, 2nd ed.) and at the factors he identified as being necessary for successful change and based our questions on these factors.

YB We wanted to find out about people's understanding of the change, why AMES was going down this path, whether there were changing perceptions of teaching practice as the implementation proceeded, what support materials they were using.

JD We asked the same questions three times during the year, apart from some that were only relevant to the beginning of the project. And we interviewed across the organisation to obtain a broad spectrum of responses.

JB *Could you tell me about some of the findings?*

JD The importance of keeping people informed came through strongly, but the most significant point is that the teachers were aware that political and other pressures meant that survival depended on the implementation of the Certificate. Another thing is that teachers' feelings about the Certificate, or about this innovation, have been amazingly positive. One interesting comment from a teacher was that the Certificate has been a good training ground for dealing with other competency-based certificates.

YB Another thing that was interesting was to see how different teaching centres tackled implementation. And it's been interesting to see how principals have encouraged teachers to be involved in the process, giving them a greater sense of ownership. Another concern right across the organisation is that the curriculum should not become too narrow. Our research seems to indicate that people initially were inclined to narrow their approach in the way they were teaching but that now, after a semester of experience, they are more confident about including things they know have worked in the past.

JD Initially the competencies were driving the teaching, now they have to fit in with the teaching

YB When you do something for the first time you become very focused, especially if there is a document, so that you are interpreting the document and sometimes the broader issues are forgotten.

JD Such as all the assessment issues which teachers have to deal with. We've never had to deal with pass/fail situations before and that still causes a lot of anxiety.

JB *Is your research likely to feed into amendments of some of the competencies?*

JD When the document comes up for reaccreditation each state will be asked to provide input into that.

JB *Well I have found this to be a very interesting conversation. I would see the work you have done as an inspiration for other teachers and other systems.*

JD We are very lucky to have had the opportunity to undertake this project and broaden our knowledge and grow in the process.

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TESOL Reviewer

Research Methods in Language Learning
David Nunan
Cambridge University Press 1992
$32.50 249 p

Researching language: issues of power and method
D. Cameron, E. Frazer, P. Harvey, M. Rampton, and K. Richardson
Routledge 1992
$29.95 148p

What's Wrong with Ethnography?
Martyn Hammersley
Routledge 1992
$32.95 230p

Reviewed by Pieter Koster, State Rail Authority of NSW

These three books deal in different ways with the topic of research as it applies to language teachers. While Nunan's book is directly addressed to teachers, that by Cameron and her colleagues, as well as Hammersley's treat the subject in broader terms and provide a sociological background to research practices and to the current debate about methodology.

At the outset one might well ask whether the teacher's role properly includes research. For this reviewer the answer is affirmative. Language teaching has developed and is developing in ways which will benefit students. Teachers are expected to be involved in new aspects of teaching such as, for example, curriculum development founded on what they know of a class and its needs and desires.

How do they know what a class needs and desires? They ask the students and use their fund of experience and knowledge. Enter research. Not people running around in white coats arguing about the validity of statistical samples, but you and I, teachers in the classroom.

Research is about asking questions and attempting to answer them. The research on which curriculum is based has become part of the teacher's agenda. Every teacher a researcher? Yes. If teaching means being concerned about effective ways of teaching and asking questions, then a teacher is engaging in research.

Research does sometimes involve compiling statistics, calculating deviations etc, and this psychometric approach is described in Nunan. (A more accessible explanation is found in Appendix C of his *Understanding Language Classrooms* [Prentice Hall 1989]). Although Nunan acknowledges the value of formal experimental research and its contribution to our understanding of how languages are learned and can best be taught, he sees more value in qualitative rather than quantitative research. This distinction is important in the debate about research methodology and characterises two schools of thought.

Nunan claims the different schools are the result of different epistemologies. The psychometric approach is associated with a positivist view of truth, where external generalisable truths exist 'out there' and the researcher has to find them and indicate how they might be applied. The ethnographic view is that truth is 'a negotiable commodity contingent upon historical context' (p. xii). Conducting research in this latter tradition demands a different approach and different methods. Nunan warns of the dangers of applying the results of research conducted in one context to another context, and argues for a context-bound approach to research.

The remainder of Nunan's book describes the various techniques and methods used in ethnographic research and what sort of conclusions can be drawn from them. He presents case studies, elicitation techniques, observation in the classroom, interaction analysis, introspection and program evaluation and gives a frank evaluation of their usefulness and limitations.

The positivist reader will find shortcomings in Nunan's approach. There will not be enough explanation of statistical methods and too little emphasis on general 'across the board truths'. Such a reader will also have partly answered questions: Can research that seems to discard the concept of objective truth really be useful? What's the point of reading a research report if your context is different from that in which the research was conducted, and the conclusions supposedly inadmissible in your different classroom?

This question of relevance is one of the issues raised by Hammersley, who points out that ethnographers often make unwarranted generalisations from their research on the assumption that the case they are studying is typical (or atypical) of a larger group. He also criticises the notion that ethnographic work produces theoretical insights whose validity and value are to be judged by the reader, and suggests that the reader may not know how to "decide the value and validity of ethnographic accounts" (p. 92). That this rather patronising assessment of the incompetent reader could equally well undermine the value of psychometric research seems to escape Hammersley's notice. His discussion of relevance, built on the assumption that unless a truth is generalisable it is irrelevant, betrays his positivist perspective.

In discussing the differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches, he challenges the idea that there are two mutually-exclusive paradigms involved and warns that the distinction is simplistic. His conclusion indicates that, while recognising the value of qualitative approaches in certain circumstances and depending on the goal of the research, he believes it ought to represent nothing more than another string in the bow of the quantitative researcher.

Hammersley also criticises the critical ethnography exemplified in Cameron et al. Cameron and her associates outline the case for an ethnography that recognises the humanity of the subjects of research and is willing to repay the debt owed them by the researcher. They argue that the researcher ought to be prepared to provide advocacy on behalf of the research subjects, and to share with them the knowledge gained. In a thought-provoking book they reject positivism and argue cogently for a realistic approach that refuses to simplify the questions of power that positivists tend to ignore. They reject both the Marxist and Maoist notion of power for a multifaceted notion of power, where individuals are at different times and in different contexts more or less the wielders and/or victims of power. At the same time they talk of power metaphorically, as a quantifiable object which can be and is 'possessed'. Their attempt to do justice to the often hidden issues of power, and their insistence that power is contextual, repays the reader many times over. For them, research can be empowering in the sense that it is conducted not merely on, or even for, but with the subjects, so that their agenda is acknowledged and their goals furthered. These views are supported by the case studies from which their tentative model has been constructed.

Hammersley's criticism of the approach espoused by Cameron and her associates is that the coherence of the critical model is threatened by the existence of multiple sources of oppression (p. 109), despite the fact that Cameron and her associates have explicitly attempted to include it in their account (p. 20-21). In their turn, Cameron and her associates criticise positivism's role in creating and maintaining power relations in society.

Asking questions and seeking answers is not always as straightforward as we may want it to be. The issues are many. But teachers should not be discouraged from asking and seeking. Although the issues sometimes appear complex and difficult to resolve, and we are tempted to stick to the positivist approach for simplicity's sake, great rewards await those willing to interact with their subjects and acknowledge their value, not merely as objects worthy of research, but as partners and co-labourers in the pursuit of a better world. And this, after all, is what teaching and research is all about.

Education and Public Policy in Australia

Simon Marginson
Cambridge University Press 1993
$29.95 255 p

Reviewed by Alan Williams, School of Education, La Trobe University

Education in Australia is going through difficult times. However ESL teachers' immediate concerns about how our students are faring in both ESL and mainstream classes mean that we are more aware of the situation in our own field, and our own institutions than of the overall picture. The recent changes in the administration of adult ESL programs, and massive changes in the Victorian school system, have made the changes in the general educational climate more evident within our field. But the changes in our work as teachers involve more than massive organisational change. An undercurrent of curriculum reform that has been underway for some years is now surfacing. National curriculum statements and accompanying profiles to guide the work of schools, and nationally accredited course offerings such as the Certificate of Spoken and Written English are emerging from the largely centralised processes that have generated them. These documents may well shape the content of our teaching over the next few years and more. Most teachers are only just coming face to face with them, and are beginning to be aware of the implications of these developments, which are reversing the widespread decentralisation of curriculum that has existed in Victoria for over twenty years.

Education and Public Policy in Australia is essential reading if you want to understand the forces behind these developments, and the processes that have led us to the present situation. Simon Marginson provides a readable and wide-ranging view of the economic theories that have come to replace educational values in policy formulation in Australian education, together with an overview of recent significant developments in various sectors. His book is compelling reading for teachers with an interest in what is happening in education.

Marginson's argument is that policy makers have set aside values such as social justice and the notion of education being useful in itself, and replaced these with a philosophy that education is essentially utilitarian and should be as much subject to the market forces that influence the production of any other product or service. He sustains this argument with an analysis of views of education that have emerged from the field of Economics and recent education policies in Australia.

The book is organised in four sections. The first provides a descriptive overview of Australian education, which is largely facts and figures. In the second section, two recent economic theories of education are examined. The first is human capital theory, which has informed education thinking in various incarnations since the late 1950s, and which holds that education is an investment which, like other investments, leads to the creation of wealth and returns dividends, with the result that education is viewed as a commodity. The second, economic rationalism, essentially holds that market forces will best regulate almost any form of human activity. The third section looks at how these views have interacted with various aspects of Australia's education system to affect recent policy directions. There is some valuable recent history here, as well as illuminating analysis of the shortcomings of a predominantly economically determined set of criteria for decision making in education. In the final section the author presents some final thoughts which do not seem as fully developed as they could be. The analysis in the earlier sections, however, more than makes up for this.

The style of writing is concise and although economic themes run through the book minimal background is assumed of readers. Basic economic concepts, as well as essential historical information about aspects of Australian education, are generally spelt out clearly. But the text is also quite dense in places, and the concentration of complex ideas and information can make some sections heavy going, although the text is never inaccessible or obscure. There is considerable attention given to the education policies of the federal coalition, and it is likely that the book was written in anticipation of an election result quite different to the one that eventuated. This is not a serious defect, but Labor's policies tend to be treated as historical artefacts, subject to analysis, rather than as a blueprint of the directions education in Australia will take over the next few years. An analysis of the tensions within Labor between the economic rationalist orientation of the leadership, and the social justice orientation held by the rank and file would be a useful post-election addition to the book.

Education and Public Policy in Australia provides useful background information and an illuminating perspective on our present circumstances as educators. It identifies the forces and processes that have combined to take teachers and educational values out of the process of setting the broad directions of our work. It is a thought-provoking analysis of a complex area, and a revealing one for teachers who are feeling disempowered and disoriented in relation to the direction they are being expected to take in their work. It is essential reading for teachers who wish to contest these new directions and values.

Classroom Observation Tasks: A Resource Book for Language Teachers and Trainers

Ruth Wajnryb
Cambridge University Press 1992
$25, 145p

Reviewed by Felicity Bisiani, ESL Method Lecturer, Monash University

In this text, part of the Cambridge Teacher Training and Development series, Wajnryb presents the concept of observation as a learning tool relevant to a variety of contexts: pre-service training, school-based support, professional development and trainer training.

She argues for developing the skill of observation as follows:

> "..it helps teachers gain a better understanding of their own teaching, while at the same time refines their ability to observe, analyse and interpret, an ability which can also be used to improve their own teaching. It is an underlying premise of this book that the development of the skills of observing is integral to the processes of professional decision making in which teachers are constantly involved." (p7)

Premised on a sound theoretical framework, the book offers helpful guiding principles for the process of observation, and practical advice and application modes for the various contexts of teacher development targeted. The frequent references to relevant and recent research will jolt many into updating their reading in this area. Thirty-five distinct observation tasks are presented, five for each of the following aspects of language learning and teaching: the Learner, Learning, the Lesson, Teaching Skills and Strategies, Classroom Management, Materials and Resources. This organisation, along with the provision of an alphabetically arranged Task Index, makes it possible to readily select an appropriate observation task according to the teacher's particular needs and interests.

Each task provides a background statement about the particular aspect of classroom behaviour it aims to examine, followed by a statement of objective, and an explanation of procedure divided into three phases: pre-lesson preparation, appropriate techniques for data collection during the lesson, and suggestions for discussion, analysis and interpretation afterwards. Included also are supporting references to research findings, and excellent probing questions designed both to highlight the significance of the data collected and to help interpret it. Finally, under the heading "Reflection", the teacher-observer is invited to relate the specific observation experience to his/her own teaching situation.

The ideas presented are suitable for all language learning levels and settings and provide guidance whereby teachers can become "the initiators of their own development" (p 10), a highly practical, stimulating alternative to the top-down approach which so often - and so ineffectively - characterises methods of teacher training and development. The tasks for observation are designed to be used where language teachers work and where the benefit of insights gained from the observation experience will be most evident, in the classroom. Practising teachers applying these techniques with an open mind could not fail to critically seek out any fossil behaviour in their work, and to be stimulated towards a reconsideration of what good language teaching involves. Teacher trainers and trainees will be similarly challenged.

Classroom Observation Tasks is an excellent resource for all those who approach language teaching with an ongoing desire to learn from their classroom experiences. It should be required reading for those who may have lost this spark.

Teaching Multilevel Classes in ESL
Jill Bell
Dominie Press 1991
$26.95, 165p

Reviewed by Tony Ferguson, Footscray City Secondary College

This North American handbook on teaching adult community ESL classes is likely to become more and more relevant to Australia, unfortunately, unless government attacks on the infrastructure of adult ESL provision and the professionalism of teachers can be reversed.

It was developed in the Modern Language Centre of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education as a practical guide for practising teachers facing mixed-level classes, and as background in the field for teachers in training. The author acknowledges that many of the ideas presented are already in widespread use. Indeed, it represents a compilation of much current best practice in TESOL and adult literacy/basic education. All of the activities in the book were tried out with an adult ESL class. One of its principal themes is the importance of student participation in the planning and evaluations as well as the learning process in mixed-level ESL classes.

The first chapter describes a typical multilevel class and its students, usefully emphasising the fact that although the varying English language abilities represent one of the most dramatic challenges facing the teacher, there are many other differences among the students which may be far more important factors in their English language learning. These factors are explained very clearly as well as the reasons for the existence of multilevel classes, their problems and their advantages.

Chapter 2, Planning a curriculum, describes a sample lesson in some detail and how it was planned from the point of view of language focus, learner grouping, types of activity, emphasis on fluency and accuracy, and group unity. Syllabus development is discussed in terms of hierarchical (structural), functional and process syllabus. Curriculum development is described in terms of theme-based and content-based approaches and refers to content-based ESL curriculum in schools.

This section was disappointing as it does not acknowledge that content-based instruction and mainstreamed ESL programs result in numbers of students who pass mainstream subjects at secondary school levels, but whose English is not strong enough, or whose conceptual development is not strong enough to continue their studies, particularly at the post-secondary level. There is no recognition that what is or should be the English language syllabus needed to support the content learning and to allow progress to higher level subject learning through English is an important issue.

Chapter 3, Assessment and evaluation, outlines the steps involved in placement, ongoing and summative evaluation. It proceeds from assessment of learners' needs in a very mixed class, through selection of goals and objectives and measures of success, ongoing assessment, teacher journals and checklists, and other forms of evaluation leading to modification of goals and programming as necessary.

Classroom management, Chapter 4, is a useful practical guide to developing group identity in the class as a whole before moving to smaller groups. She advocates the formation of multiple smaller groups of varied sizes at different times, arguing the disadvantages of fixed groups, and presents techniques for their organisation. In contrast, in Chapter 5 the focus is on whole class activities.

Both Chapter 6 and 7 revert to group activities and have excellent practical hints on management of grouping such as equal ability, cross ability and jigsaw groups.

This is followed by a section on self-access materials and one featuring a sample lesson sequence for a mixed ESL community class. The final chapter contains teaching resources and further reading references which are not up-to-date.

Teaching Multilevel Classes in ESL is accessible, clear and practical. It would make a useful introduction to methodology for pre-service and certificate level TESOL trainees. TESOL trained and experienced teachers would find it worth skimming through, as even the most homogeneous class is in fact a multilevel class.

TESOL Resources

prepared by Alec Drummond

Migration Oz : an investigative resource kit **Canberra : Bureau of Immigration and Population Research, 1993**

This resource kit is designed as an inquiry-based, multidisciplinary package of photocopiable sheets of source material on different aspects of immigration to Australia. Each "evidence file" includes historical documents and illustrations, newspaper articles and cartoons, statistics, extracts from government reports, records of interviews and photographs. The kit is aimed at secondary students of Australian Studies, History, Economics, Politics, Geography, Environmental Studies and English from Years 9 to 12. A set of teachers' notes outlining the issues and giving models for the kit's use is provided.

Collie, Joanne and Slater, Stephen *Short stories for creative language classrooms* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1993. ISBN 0 521 40653 6. 101p $16.95 Audio cassette $15.00 ISBN 0 521 40652 8

A collection of eleven short but unabridged stories from the 19th Century to today, including ones by Peter Carey, Tim Winton and Suniti Namjoshi, together with creative activities for upper-intermediate to advanced learners of English. Activities for before, during and after reading each story are included and each unit ends with a creative development section to extend the themes of, and the reader's involvement with the story. Also included are notes on the authors and stories and notes for the teacher on using the material. The audio cassette contains readings of each story.

Making contact : your child's school **Sydney : NSW AMES, 1993 $55.00 Kit (Teacher's Book, Video, Audio cassette) ; $25.00 Teacher's Book ISBN 0 7305 0780 7 ; $8.00 Student's Book ISBN 0 7305 0788 2; Audio cassette ISBN 0 7305 0732 7**

A video resource package which aims to help parents gain the English language and literacy skills they need to communicate with their child's school. The video presents eight experiences of contact between school and parent. It may be used to focus on language and cultural difficulties experienced by parents in situations such as staff development and school open days. The resource takes a text based approach to language learning and provides model texts, worksheets, a step by step activity guide for teachers and visual and written information about school. It can be used with beginning through to intermediate learners although most of the worksheets are targeted at post-beginner level. Worksheets in the Teacher's Book are copyright free. A complete set of worksheets is available in the separate Student's Book.

Nunan, David; Lockwood, Jane; Hood, Susan *The Australian English Course 2* Oakleigh : Cambridge University Press, 1993. Student's book 144p $19.95 ISBN 0 521 39591 7; Teacher's book 189p $35.00 ISBN 0 521 39590 9; Audio cassette $19.95 ISBN 0 521 39592 5

The 2nd level (low-intermediate to intermediate) of the Australian English Course for adult and young learners of general English for social and transactional purposes. The course integrates the elements of topics, tasks, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, functions, notions and learning-how-to-learn. The topics in Book 2 - including "Families and friends", "Communications", "Education", "Employment", "Entertainment" and "Food and health" - are relevant to learners from different cultural backgrounds. Students are encouraged throughout to contribute their own views and to reflect on different cultural perspectives. As well as simulated and authentic tasks and texts covering various language skills, each unit contains out of class activities for the learner to practise the language learnt outside the classroom.

Grundy, Peter *Newspapers* (Resource books for teachers series) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993 134p $23.95 ISBN 0 19 437192 1

This book contains over 100 ideas for making effective use of the readily available, authentic English language texts in newspapers. The activities are practical and most need little teacher preparation. The book provides activities to familiarise students with English language newspapers and aspects such as layout, the use of pictures and personal responses to newspaper stories. The book includes reading and writing activities and ideas for extended project work.

Freeman, Wendy *News! Read all about it Rose Bay* : Classic Communication Skills, 1993 51p $16.95 ISBN 1 875414 339

Six units of work on newspaper articles - on themes such as fire, crashes, robberies and accidents - each with a "Mindmap" and introductory activities designed to facilitate scanning for specific information; news stories and exercises. The exercises aim to enlighten students on the information-packed style of newspaper sentences. Exercises to extend classes with more creative tasks - role play, interviews - are also included. An audio cassette of the newspaper scripts is also available.

Doyle, Brendan *Pleased to meet you : everyday Aussie conversations* Chippendale : Melting Pot Press, 1993 89p ISBN 1 875728 00 7; Audio cassette ISBN 1 875728 01 5; Video ISBN 1 875728 02 3

A course in casual Australian conversation to help learners understand its conventions and language. A series of casual conversations are on audio cassette and video, with tapescripts in the book giving notes on colloquial phrases and the uses of certain parts of the conversations (including body language) to show interest, give feedback, keep a conversation going, check information and so on. The book includes teaching notes with sequenced learning activities using the conversations.

***How Australia's Parliament works : a learning program on parliamentary government for NESB and mainstream students* Canberra : Parliamentary Education Office, 1993 $30.00 plus $5.00 postage and handling.**

This kit for NESB and mainstream students is an introduction to Australia's parliamentary system aiming to promote an understanding of that system and to encourage active citizenship, particularly by NESB students. The kit has a strong language focus and includes a vocabulary book of 500 parliamentary terms and their meanings. Also in the kit are two videos - "Democracy at work" and "Getting help from your MP" - an audio cassette, several posters, a game ("Raising the flag") and an activity book including teacher's notes and student exercises.

Butterworth, Tony *Work awareness Stage 2 Post beginner* Sydney, Adult Migrant Education Service, NSW, 1993 Set $42.00; Student's Book 90p $15.00 ISBN 0 7305 0700 9; Teacher's Book 48p $12.00 ISBN 0 7305 0724 6; Cassette $15.00 ISBN 0 7305 0716 5

These materials are designed for use as a module in a general English course or a vocational English or pre-vocational course for adult ESL learners. The resource focuses on developing students' understanding of the Australian employment context and related language skills. Varied exercise types are included and cultural differences in approaches and attitudes to work are raised. Teaching strategies and suggestions on follow-up activities, audio cassette transcripts and answers to listening exercises are included in the Teacher's Book

Freebody, Peter and Welch, Anthony (editors) *Knowledge, culture and power : international perspectives on literacy as policy and practice* (Critical perspectives on literacy and education series) London : Falmer Press, 1993 $39.95 ISBN 1 85000 834 5

The essays in this book expose some of the unquestioned preconceptions that underlie literacy policies and practices around the world. From cross-national and cross-discipline perspectives, and examining societies of the North and South as well as dispossessed peoples, the writers show how literacy policies and practices play crucial roles in accounting for and justifying differences of colour, race, language, gender and class. Case studies focusing on the historical role of literacy in the maintenance or suppression of marginal groups are complemented by reports of data on access to literacy competence for various sub-national minority groups. The essays look at important educational, policy, popular and media accounts of literacy and reveal the cultural and political dynamics underlying literacy.

Kalantzis, Mary & Cope, Bill (editors) *The Powers of literacy : a genre approach to teaching writing* (Critical perspectives on literacy and education series) London : The Falmer Press, 1993 286p $39.50 ISBN 0 75070 227 3

This collection of essays is both an introduction to the genre approach of teaching writing and an extension of the debates within the "genre school" in Australia. There is an historical overview and critique from a "post-progressivist" perspective of the traditionalist and progressivist approaches to teaching literacy; introductions to the theory and practice of the genre approach; and explorations of how this approach can inform gender criticism, grammar teaching and curriculums. A bibliographic essay on the development of genre-based literacy theory and practice and a glossary conclude the collection

Parrott, Martin *Tasks for language teachers : a resource book for training and development* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1993 325p $47.50 ISBN 0 521 42666 9

This book contains 40 tasks designed to stimulate discussion of key issues related to language learning and teaching, from the nature and processes of language learning to specific materials and techniques for use by teachers. Discussion tasks are designed to encourage users to examine general principles and issues in the context of their specific teaching circumstances and to exchange ideas. The classroom-based tasks provide a framework for small-scale classroom research - testing ideas, assumptions and hypotheses in the context of specific learners and classes. The book is aimed at professional courses for language teachers, in-service training and informal professional development. The tasks are photocopiable for use in groups by trainers

Davies, Carmel *One world : ESL and the environment : a topic approach.* Melbourne : Adult Migrant Education Services, 1993. 74p. $19.95 Audio cassette $5.00. ISBN 0 7241 7701 9

This book and audio cassette is designed for adult learners of English (ASLPR 0+ to ASLPR 1+) and uses the topical topic of the environment. Activities cover comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, listening, pronunciation and graph interpretation through units on the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer, shopping (packaging), compost, saving energy, UV rays and sun protection, transport, chemicals, shellfish, feral cats, tree planting and salinity. The audio cassette includes dialogues and listening activities based on these topics.

Meehan, Rill *Romance on the rocks* Melbourne : Adult Migrant Education Services, 1993. Novel 97p $7.95 ISBN 0 7241 7698 5; Workbook 129p $21.95 ISBN 0 7241 7699 3 Audio cassettes - novel $12.00; workbook $5.00

A light romantic novel of approximately 35,000 words written especially for adult ESL learners. The workbook provides extensive exercises focusing on vocabulary, writing, idiomatic language and comprehension. It is suitable for intermediate level students. Two audio cassettes are also available, one of the novel and one of listening exercises and activities.

Power, Maggie *Competencies in context series : Getting started* 103p $25.95 ISBN 0 7241 7703 5; Finding a job 71p $25.95 ISBN 0 7241 7704 3; *Applying for a job* 116p $29.95 ISBN 0 7241 7702 7. Melbourne : Adult Migrant Education Services, 1993.

This series of three books for adult ESL learners is competency-based with direct links to the national Certificate in Spoken and Written English. Language and literacy skills are covered through units based on different aspects of gaining employment. *Getting started* includes job focus activities; describing past work experience; making plans regarding future employment goals; recognition of qualifications; and preparing a resume. *Finding a job* focuses on job searching strategies and the language involved. *Applying for a job* covers telephoning for an interview; application forms; writing covering letters; job interviews; and describing specific work experience. Each module consists of a student workbook with exercises, answers and tapescripts and an audio cassette.

Mallan, Kerry *Laugh lines : exploring humour in children's literature* Newtown : Primary English Teaching Association, 1993 76p ISBN 1 875622 06 3

Part of PETA's Literature support series, this book looks at children's humour, particularly in literature. Mallan analyses what children find funny; types of humour in children's books; the value of humour; picture book humour; humorous verse; and recent developments in the style of humour in children's literature. The book concludes with suggestions for using humorous literature in the primary classroom and a select bibliography.

Lazar, Gillian *Literature and language teaching : a guide for teachers and trainers* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1993 267p $37.50 ISBN 0 521 40651 X

This book is for teachers and trainers who want to incorporate literature into the language classroom and explore the issues involved. It explores different approaches to using literature with learners at all levels of proficiency; suggests criteria for selecting and evaluating materials for classroom use; identifies some of the distinctive features of novels, short stories, poems and plays so that these can be successfully exploited in the classroom; and provides a range of practical ideas and activities for developing materials for use with learners. The book includes texts in English by authors from many countries.

***Alec Drummond** works in the AMES Resource Centre Myer House Victoria*

Glossary

ALBE *Adult Literacy Basic Education*

AMEP *Adult Migrant English Program* is the title of the Commonwealth-funded English-language teaching program for adult immigrants in Australia.

ASLPR *Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating* scale which gives an indication of how well an ESL speaker can listen to, speak, read and write English and which is used to place learners in classes of similar levels of English in the Adult Migrant English Program and other adult settings. It is a 12-point scale between 0 (zero proficiency) and 5 (native-like proficiency).

EAP *English for Academic Purposes /Study Purposes/Further Study* are specific courses of TESOL for students intending to enter senior secondary, TAFE or tertiary courses in various fields. They focus on content and skills for cognitive academic language proficiency.

EFL *Students English as a Foreign Language Students* are overseas students in non-English speaking countries who are studying English. Some EFL students visit Australia to undertake courses in English.

ELICOS *English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students* is the term for short courses for overseas fee-paying students in Australia.

ESB *English-Speaking Background* is the term used in Australia to describe people and communities who speak English as their first language .

ESL *Students English as a Second Language Students* are very diverse in terms of their life, language, cultural and learning experience. Their needs are similarly diverse. Primary and secondary ESL students include:

children beginning school in Australia at the usual commencement age who have had little or no exposure to English, being recently arrived immigrants or Australian-born children whose home language may be a language other than English, in which they may have some literacy;

children beginning school in Australia at the usual commencement age who are acquiring English and another language simultaneously at home;

students starting school in Australia after the usual commencement age without any previous schooling in any country, with little or no English and little or no literacy in their first language, but possibly with work or military experience;

students starting school after the usual commencement age but with severely disrupted schooling;

students who arrive from overseas with about the equivalent amount of schooling in their first language as their peers have had in English. Some may have had some experience of learning English as a Foreign or Second Language overseas;

students (many of whom are Australian-born) who have had the major part of their schooling in Australia but who need assistance to meet the English language demands of mainstream classes;

students from non-English speaking backgrounds who have specific learning difficulties.

ESP *English for Specific Purposes* are courses teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages for specific occupational or study purposes, such as English for Nurses or English for the Hotel Industry or English for Engineers.

First-Phase Learners , Second-Phase Learners, Third -Phase Learners. While there are as yet no standard definitions or terms for English as aSecond language learners, TESOL writers in some Australian education systems use these: *First-phase learners* are beginners in English and include learners who have yet to reach fluency and confidence in basic, interpersonal, communicative uses of English. *Second-phase learners* can at least communicate at a basic interpersonal level in English and can function to some limited degree in social and formal educational settings. Some writers distinguish only these two phases, others distinguish a *third phase* where learners are developing greater competence in spoken and written English for academic use in educational settings. However, the terms *second-* and *third-phase learners* may sometimes be defined to include NESB students who speak fluent conversational English much like their ESB peers in mainstream classes and whose linguistic and cultural competencies and identities may be unstable. They may have been born in Australia and had most or all of their schooling here and know little of their first language.

IEC/IELC *Intensive English (Language) Centre*

IELTS *International English Language Testing System.* A set of tests developed recently in Australia and Britain and used for selection and placement of EFL/ESL students, especially overseas students, in tertiary education.

LOTE *Languages Other Than English*, a general term used in Australia partly because many languages are used daily for significant purposes in Australian communities and cannot be considered foreign. Some school systems use the term positively to describe children who come from homes where another language is spoken.

L_1 first language

L_2 second or subsequent language

Macro-skills or the four macro-skills: the useful term used by many Australian TESOL-trained teachers to refer to listening, speaking, reading and writing. The ordering of the skills is also significant in TESOL thinking.

NESB *Non-English Speaking Background* is used to describe people, communities and their children whose first language is a language other than English.

TEFL *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* is used to describe teaching English usually as a branch of study rather than a language of instruction to overseas learners in or from non-English speaking countries.

TESL *Teaching English as a Second Language* is the widely used term for teaching English to non-English speaking background immigrants and their children in Australia, especially at school level, to empower them to participate in Australian society and public life. ESL students here are mostly taught in English.

TESOL *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* covers both TESL and TEFL and the whole range of language and sociocultural contexts in which teaching takes place. It recognises that learners may speak more than one other language or that they may be acquiring English simultaneously with another language.

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TESOL in Context is the biannual publication of the Australian Council of TESOL Associations for teachers and institutions with TESOL programs. It is designed to be a forum of expression of ideas on all matters related to TESOL. It is the successor to the successful TESOL News .

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ACTA Australian Council of TESOL Associations

MISSION STATEMENT

ACTA is the national coordinating body representing all teachers of English to speakers of other languages. It aims to promote and strengthen English whilst supporting and respecting people's linguistic and cultural heritage.

English is the language of public communication and the lingua franca for the many different sociocultural groups in Australia, as well as a major language of international commuication. For full and effective participation in education, society and in the international arena, competence in English is necessary.

TESOL is the teaching of English by specialist teachers to students of language backgrounds other than English in order to develop their skills in spoken and written English communication. At the same time, TESOL teachers strive to be sensitive to the diverse linguistic, cultural and learning needs of individuals.

TESOL draws on a knowledge of the nature of the English language, first and second language acquisition, crosscultural communication and appropriate curriculum, materials and methodology for multicultural contexts. It is an integral part of the broader social, educational and political context. It can inform and be informed by this context.

As a program, profession and field of study and research, TESOL shares certain understandings and practices with the subject English as a mother tongue, child and adult literacy, languages other than English (LOTE), and bilingual and multilingual education, but also has distinctive characteristics.

ACTA'S OBJECTIVES ARE:

TO REPRESENT AND SUPPORT THE INTERESTS OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

ACTA is committed to quality teacher training and professional development in TESOL, working conditions and career paths, which enable teachers to have the stability and continuity of employment to develop, maintain and deliver quality programs.

TO ENSURE ACCESS TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

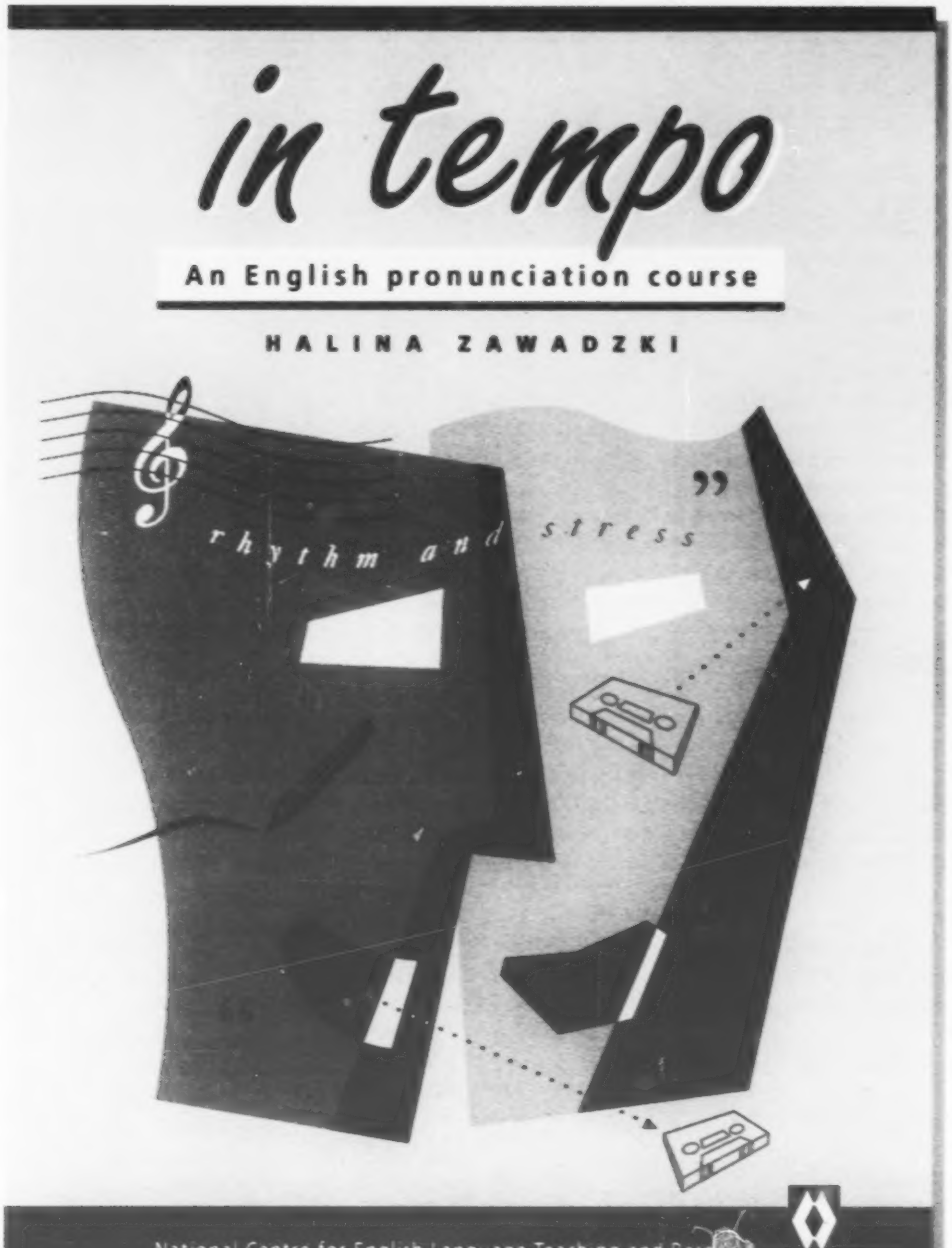
ACTA is committed to ensuring that all students with ESL needs have access to programs that acknowledge and meet their diverse specific needs. These students may be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, permanent residents with LOTE backgrounds, refugees, fee-paying overseas students or students in Australian-sponsored programs overseas.

TO ENCOURAGE THE IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY OF QUALITY PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

ACTA is committed to the development and maintenance of the highest quality programs, for students, at pre-primary, primary,secondary or tertiary level that are appropriately funded, resourced and staffed, and articulated in clear pathways.

TO PROMOTE THE STUDY, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF TESOL AT STATE, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

ACTA is committed to ensuring that TESOL and TESOL-related issues are debated and accorded due recognition in state and national policy initiatives, as well as in the international community.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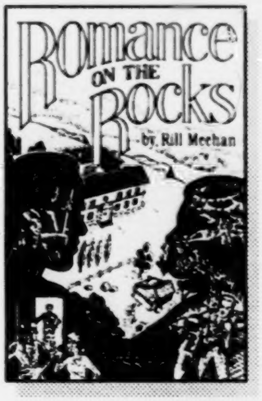

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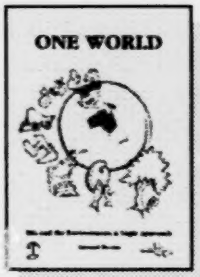

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Book	***$17.95***
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by Jenny Green

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